

Dragon Wars

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Summary: [newsummary] Forced to teach the outcasts to ride dragons in order to save his friends, Hiccup's actions will bring upon Berk a war unlike any before. As humans and dragons fight on both sides, only one side can come out on top. Along the way, Hiccup will discover the truth of Alvin's betrayal and find that Alvin may not be the only revenge-seeking outcast. Warning: Dark.

## 1. Evil Lurks

\*\*Edit:\*\* I'm writing this edit right after having completed chapter eight. Looking back on this first chapter, I'm a little disappointed in it. I ask you, the reader, to give this story a chance by at least reading up to the second or third chapter before deciding if this story suites you to read or not to read. At the point I originally wrote this chapter, I didn't have all the ideas and plans in my head on where this tale would go. Now that I do, this chapter feels icky to me x3 I don't want to change it for the sake of my current readers so please just bear with me through this, haha. \*\*End Edit.\*\*

Wait... what? Where did this come from?

I don't even know.

You just sit there and BAM... inspiration.

So, a How to Train Your Dragon story. I can't imagine it'll be too long. I'm kind of twisting it a bit to only somewhat follow the show. It definitely follows the movie and Gift of the Night Fury, but the only episode of the show I'm really taking into account is Alvin and the Outsiders... I don't really care for the Dragon Training Academy in this story, haha.

Oh, oh gosh... I don't know if I can write accents. Just pretend they're there, okay?

But here it goes x3

## \*\*Chapter One: Evil Lurks\*\*

"So, where's Meatlug?" Astrid asked, falling down onto the grass beside Fishlegs.

The large boy looked over at her, glancing up from a book he was reading. Upon further inspection, Astrid discovered that it was \_The Dragon Manuel\_. He was reading it again? She scooted closer and peered onto his page, discovering that he had the Gronckle page open. Astrid turned her eyes up to his face and saw his gaze dart from the book to her. He seemed to blush, his cheeks reddening as he snapped the book closed and placed it off to the side.

"Sorry, I just like to read the page and see what about Meatlug is still true and what isn't," Fishlegs explained awkwardly before shrugging. "And Meatlug's just hanging with a couple of the other dragons. I worry about her when I'm not with her, but I guess she just likes to be with her own kind every now and then."

Astrid nodded, swiping some of her bangs away from her face. They just fell right back into place like always. A bit annoying, but nothing much to be done about it. That was how they were cut and she liked how she sported the look. "Stormfly's doing that, too."

"Aw, it's a human party," a voice suddenly laughed.

Astrid and Fishlegs turned their attention to the new arrival. It wasn't just one person, but three. Tuffnut, Ruffnut, and Snotlout. Snotlout had been the one to speak as Ruffnut and Tuffnut were currently in a war at the moment. Tuffnut managed to overcome his sister briefly, pulling her into a head lock and giving her the biggest noogie he could manage before she delivered a blow to him stomach. Tuffnut doubled over with a gasp of pain and remained curled up on the ground while Ruffnut and Snotlout joined Astrid and Fishlegs.

"A human party?" Astrid inquired, raising an eyebrow.

Ruffnut rolled her eyes like it was obvious. "Yeah, all our dragons are off playing today. Even they understand how cool they are. They hang out with each other a lot more than us now."

"That's not true. Meatlug and I are almost inseparable," Fishlegs countered, throwing up a defense quickly, as if the idea that his dragon not spending time with him meant that they couldn't be friends any more.

"I was just exaggerating, chill out," Ruffnut huffed. "This is the first time we haven't all gone riding together in a couple weeks."

Tuffnut came crawling up to them. He sucked in a breath and pushed himself to his feet, recovering from his injury. Though he sent Ruffnut a glare, he didn't seem too intent of beating her up again. Perhaps afraid of the possible outcomes of another attempt. So he wheeled to Astrid and Fishlegs, as if he expected them to have all the answers to his problems as he declared, "Yeah, so what should we

do today?"

"We could go fishing," Fishlegs tried.

Snotlout snorted, signaling the end of that discussion. Once the conversation died, a silence settled around the group of five as they sat there in contemplation. Now that the war was over and they were friends with dragons, the daily routines of preparing for attacks were gone. No more dragon training or rebuilding or the like. Now that they were friends with dragons, most days were spent dragon training, flying around together, having fun, and, as Hiccup said, "building trust." With their dragons taking a day off from that, it was like there was nothing left to do for the Viking teens. It was a sad thought, since the day was (relatively) warm for Berk, with the sun shining in a bright gleam and the snow melted for the time being, resulting in long fields of grass and, well, color being seen on the landscape.

"Mornin', kids," a hefty voice called up to them.

They were sitting on a hillside where some of the sheep wandered about, crying out loudly. A couple dragons meandered, but none made a move for the sheep. Luckily, most all the dragons now understood that the white balls of fluff were meant to be considered friends. Fish were the main source of their food.

"Morning," the kids called back, watching as Stoick the Vast lumbered up the hill to them.

A smile was barely visible among the wild mass of his bright hair. His eyes squinted with a pleasurable gleam, though. Behind him, Gobber followed along diligently, ranting off about things that Stoick didn't seem to keen on listening to. Once Gobber realized Stoick wasn't listening, his mouth stopped moving and he looked over, spotting the teens. He waved his actual hand, the fake one (currently in the form of a giant metal hammer) hanging by his side idly.

"Where's Hiccup?"

The five teenagers seemed almost baffled by the question, though they should have expected it since Hiccup was Stoick's son. They all looked at each other, mouths slightly agape as they searched their brains for the answer. Finally, it occurred to them that maybe not all the dragons were taking a break from their riders.

Astrid rose to her feet and straightened up, "Probably with Toothless."

"Really, I thought he'd be with you kids," Stoick sighed.

"Hang out with us when his dragon is a Night Fury? I don't blame him for not hanging around. Plus, I bet he just can't stand Ruffnut's face," Tuffnut chuckled and received a grin from Snotlout.

Ruffnut wasn't quite as pleased and brought her fist down on Tuffnut's head. His helmet both protected him from Ruffnut's powerful blast, but the metal conking hard against his skull also hurt. While his sister recoiled her hand, wondering why she had ever thought smacking his helmet had been a smart idea, Tuffnut sunk to the ground

once again and clutched his head, moaning. The two muttered bitterly for a moment while the rest ignored them.

"Is something wrong?" Fishlegs suddenly asked, noticing that Stoick didn't look too pleased.

The chief's eyes had changed, taking on more of a sullen glaze. His arms had crossed and he looked almost angered about something. Gobber was standing behind him, mouth slightly open and confusion evident on his features. The former blacksmith didn't seem to have anything to say as Stoick went on to say, "Well, it just concerns me that Hiccup doesn't hang out with you kids too much without Toothless around. I'm concerned that he doesn't know how to hang out with people anymore, just dragons."

Astrid blinked her blue eyes in sympathy for Stoick's concern. She looked over, Fishlegs returning the look with a frown. When she glanced at the other three, only Ruffnut seemed to have an idea of the situation, a frown also splayed across her face. Snotlout couldn't seem more bored while Tuffnut had just recently stood back up and was wobbling about, seeming dizzy. The blond girl was about to speak but Fishlegs beat her to it.

"We'll go find him, sir. Then maybe the six of us can go do something."

"Like what?" Snotlout spat.

Ruffnut dodged a fist her brother swung at her in an attempt to get even. After he missed, he turned back to the matter at hand and continued like he hadn't just tried to sock his sister in the face. "We could just go explore the island. I mean, maybe we'll find a new dragon or something."

By the way he said it, Astrid and the others could tell he was being sarcastic. Stoick didn't catch on too well and beamed, nodding his head at the kids.

"Sounds great! You kids get on it, will you? I've got work to be doing," the tribe leader declared, then started off.

Gobber shrugged at them, then wobbled after his leader while the five teens groaned. There was nothing to discover on the island. A new dragon wasn't just going to appear because they decided to go wandering around together. After wary glanced, they finally settled on the fact that they at least needed to find a way to locate Hiccup first. Assuming he was on Toothless, he could be anywhere. He might not even be on Berk.

\* \* \*

><p>The ocean had a beautiful noise. Its rhythmic beating was everywhere, even far away from land, where waves crashed against themselves and stirred under the power of Toothless' downstrokes. The dragon was practically sailing along the water, his form hovering not far above it. As his wings beat down, their tips stroked the water gently, causing ripples to fan out until they met an opposing force and stopped. Hiccup had his eyes closed, enjoying the freezing spray of water that came up to meet him in the face. Though it was cold, it dried away faster than it arrived, as Toothless went speeds the spray

couldn't quite handle.<p>

"All right, bud. Ready to head back in for a bit?" he asked the dragon.

Toothless craned his head just the slightest, able to look back at Hiccup with his bold eyes. He opened his mouth a bit, showing his agreement with that dragon smile of his. His teeth were retracted, revealing pink gums. The dragon turned, veering through the air and Hiccup quickly adjusted his tail to make the turn smoothly. They headed back towards shore, gaining speed as they approached the Isle of Berk from one side, coming to a rest along one of its long cliffs.

As soon as Toothless touched ground, Hiccup released himself from the saddle and stirrups, swinging over off of Toothless and landing on the ground rather steadily. He grinned. He considered it an accomplishment every time he landed well, as it had proven difficult a couple times with his left foot being a prosthetic. He had had the fake foot while a fair while now and maneuvering was normal again, but landing was the one time when he recalled his foot was gone, as he only felt the jolt of land go through one foot and not two. Standing up straight, he raised his arms into the air and stretched out his back, as he was hunched most of the time while they were flying.

Toothless made a funny noise and mimicked Hiccup, reaching his front feet forward as far as he could to elongate his back. His wings spread out to their full length, nearly knocking Hiccup forward as the boy had been standing right next to the Night Fury. Hiccup managed to right himself before he could crash forward and he laughed, turning back to look at his best friend.

"You've been flying the past while, how could you possibly need to stretch your wings?" he questioned the dragon.

Toothless stood back up straight and made the noise that Hiccup had come to know as Toothless' laugh. The Night Fury bounded forward, as if challenging Hiccup to try and catch him. He stopped a few ahead and looked back, cocking his head as if to tell Hiccup it was time to stretch their legs now.

Hiccup smirked. "I'm coming for you!"

He darted forward, bolting after his friend. As he neared Toothless, he reached out, intent on trying to stop the Night Fury. Toothless wasn't so ready to lose, though, waggling his rear and tail before turning and bounding away. Being much bigger, his one leap was equal to many of Hiccup's steps. The poor boy struggled to try and catch back up, but refused to give in, attempting to outsmart his dragon.

Toothless stopped and waited. He watched Hiccup slowly advanced. Then the boy jumped forward, hoping to land on Toothless' tail. The dragon pulled it away quickly and Hiccup hit the ground, his face getting tickled by the grass that was there to greet him. Toothless proceeded to laugh again.

Hiccup felt himself flush, feeling a bit stupid. He pushed himself up and then flopped back onto his butt, smiling into the sunshine with

closed eyes. "Okay, bud, you win."

"Hiccup!"

Hiccup and Toothless craned their heads around to see Astrid and the others running toward them. When they arrived, Fishlegs was sucking in breath while the others tried to maintain their composure. Only Astrid seemed unaffected by the run they had just endured. Hiccup stood up to greet her, smiling.

"Hey, guys. What's up?" he asked.

"Uh," Astrid started, looking over at Toothless and then back at Hiccup. "We were coming to see if you wanted to, you know, hang out."

Hiccup narrowed his eyes questioningly. Sure, they all "hung out" together, but never had they approached him to request that from him. Mostly they just did it. Usually while out flying or afterward in the Great Hall. Sometimes they just hung out around town for kicks during the day, but it never seemed a normal occurrence since Hiccup liked to work in his shop and the others all did... whatever it was they did.

"Well, sure, Astrid. We'll hang, right, Toothless?"

The boy glanced over at the dragon, who blinked in approval.

Then Astrid seemed to get awkward. Hiccup was a bit taken aback. Although he didn't like to think about it, he knew he was awkward. It was his thing more than anyone else in the group. And Astrid? She was never awkward. Well, until now, apparently.

"Here's the thing, Hiccup. We want to hang together. Without... dragons," she declared, throwing her arms out wide like it was an awesome idea or some sort.

Hiccup was confused only briefly before he realized the true essence of this. It wasn't Astrid's idea. It wasn't Snotlout's or Fishlegs' or Ruffnut's or Tuffnut's. It was his father's. It wasn't a terrible idea, Hiccup knew, but it once again revealed to him that his father didn't understand. Stoick didn't know what Toothless meant to him. What dragons meant to him. His whole life, he had been an outcast, a loser, the useless one. Thanks for Toothless, thanks to dragons, now he was a somebody, a hero. He had friends. He had a father...

"Go back and tell me father I said no," Hiccup responded. His voice carried a level of coldness that he never knew he could use, especially not directed at Astrid.

"Tag," Tuffnut shouted, punching Snotlout in the arm and turning to take off.

Ruffnut and Fishlegs sprinted away, avoiding the situation as quickly as possible. It took Snotlout a moment to realize what had just happened, but once he discovered the true reason behind the random game of tag, he was like lightning, fleeing the scene. No one wanted to be around for this. Not even Astrid. She was left with no choice, though, as the others abandoned her faster than Toothless could fly.

She sighed, reaching up and grabbing her bangs, frustration evident on her face as she searched for the right words. "Hiccup, your father only wants what's best for you. He has a point. When Toothless and the other dragons were on Dragon Island, dragons were all you could think about. When you're with just people, I think it's time we found a way for you to converse without having dragons around or on your mind."

"I didn't say my father was wrong, I just don't agree. I don't feel wrong about where I stand."

"I don't feel you're wrong, either. But Hiccup, don't you want to be able to talk about other things? Don't you want to be able to be... normal among your own tribe?"

"Normal, Astrid?" Hiccup questioned, his voice rising in intensity. Toothless, nearby, moved forward, ready to protect Hiccup if Astrid was threatening him. Hiccup raised a hand to calm him. "Astrid, I'll never be normal to this tribe. I was never normal to this tribe. I was a failure before and all I am now is a 'hero.' You know why? Dragons. If I hadn't met Toothless, if I hadn't learned how to train them, if I hadn't defeated the Red Death, would you even be talking to me right now?"

The last question threw Astrid off. She had never really thought about what life would be like if they were still at war with the dragons. She had never thought about what life would be like if Hiccup was still looked upon as something short of a failure. Her mouth was hanging open slightly as she searched for something to say. Hiccup could see clearly that she had nothing.

"Astrid, I love my father, I really do. He doesn't know me, though. I don't know if he ever will. I can't ignore Toothless. I can't... leave him. He was the first one to ever accept me. At the time when my father disowned me, Toothless protected me. He didn't leave me. Toothless was willing to listen to me when I screamed at him not to shoot my father but my father wasn't willing to listen to me when I asked him not to do anything to Toothless. Not to go try and kill the dragons. Toothless is the reason I even have my father's pride at all now," he finally breathed, the words pouring out in a rush. Pain laced its way among each word and Hiccup winced at his own show of weakness.

Toothless, seeming to understand the situation, waddled up and stuck his face into Hiccup's, nuzzling it. Hiccup reached up, scratching Toothless under the chin and down the neck. The dragon let out cries of pleasure, relishing in the gentle combing of Hiccup's finger on his scales. He licked at Hiccup's face, much to Hiccup's displeasure, before turning to look at Astrid, his green eyes begging her to understand. Toothless, while not having been an outcast before, felt obligated to Hiccup. The boy was his freedom and his friend. The two relied on each other in ways Astrid knew she would never even understand with Stormfly.

"All right, Hiccup, I get it. But you need to at least make an effort to make your dad happy. Or think you're trying. So come hang out with us. Toothless can come too," she said, giving in. She had nothing else to argue and nothing else to defend. It wasn't like she was the one with a problem of Hiccup's behavior. Heck, if she did, she

certainly wouldn't be sort of dating him (neither of them had the confidence to admit that they were an actual thing now).

Hiccup smiled, seeming relieved. In that moment, Astrid understood exactly what Stoick had been worried about. Knowing that Toothless was coming, Hiccup seemed at much more ease. Before, she could see the tension in his shoulders, the spark in his eyes, and the biting of his lip. It made her worry for a moment, but that was just how Hiccup was. It was how he would be. He was the Dragon Trainer, the Dragon Rider, the Hero of Berk, and even the Dragon Conquerer according to Alvin the Treacherous.

"C'mon. We better go find the others," Astrid sighed, reaching out and grabbing Hiccup's hand.

She pulled him forward before he fell into step beside her. He wrapped his hand back around her's, squeezing it in thanks. She looked over at him and smiled. Hiccup practically melted under her gaze and attempted to smile back, though it looked nervous and awkward. Astrid chuckled and nudged him lightly with her shoulder as they continued to walk. Toothless followed along behind, keeping just a couple feet behind Hiccup, close enough to keep them aware of his presence but not so close as touch them.

Astrid spotted Fishlegs, Snotlout, and the twins before Hiccup. She let go of him and jogged over while he continued to just make his way along. The female came up to them, her hands going to her hips and her eyes raising as she looked down at the four, who had grown quite comfortable just lying on their backs under the shade of a tree in the field. "Quite a rough tag game, huh?"

"It was the sickest game of tag ever, Astrid. You missed a good one," Tuffnut shrugged while Ruffnut cackled.

"If you want to play it with me again later, you're more than welcome to, Astrid," Snotlout chuckled, rolling over his stomach and looking up at her with the best seductive gaze he could manage.

Astrid used her foot to shove his face into the ground. Hiccup came up beside her and blinked.

"We have such a violent friendship," he stuttered, watching as Ruffnut and Tuffnut burst into laughter and Snotlout looked back up, spitting dirt from his mouth.

Fishlegs stood up and shrugged. "I think it's a Viking thing."

Once everyone was up, they started off. Snotlout decided to take the lead because he was the coolest Viking on the island so he deserved to take charge. No one really cared to argue with him at the moment so they were happy to follow along. They wandered one of the old paths that cut around near the edge of the island. A hill to their right went down to a cliff while their left was a dense forest, sunlight littering the darkness it contained. Toothless took rear of the group while Hiccup forced himself to at least walk up by Astrid to look like he was trying. Toothless was with them, at least, so he could always turn around to his friend and pet if he really felt the need.

"So, what if we actually find a new kind of dragon out here?" Ruffnut

asked.

Fishlegs jumped up and down excitedly, suddenly spilling all the kinds of dragons he knew from his mouth. The waterfall of dragons became too much of an onslaught for the others.

"Shut up, damn it. No one cares," Tuffnut groaned, clutching his head. "Besides, you're making my brain hurt."

"I thought you needed a brain in order for it to hurt," his sister cackled. Snotlout burst into laughter from the front.

Tuffnut launched at her and the two began their usual round of punching and kicking. The others hardly noticed, continuing on. It was an every day occurrence and the two never injured each other enough to cause worry or distress.

Snotlout, remembering Ruffnut's earlier question, glanced back and said with a coy smirk, "We don't need to worry. We've got Hiccup the Dragon Conquerer with us! He'll tame any wild beast we come across."

Hiccup narrowed his eyes. He wasn't a big fan of the title. He was all right with any of them but that one. He hadn't conquered the dragons at all. He had befriended them and trained them. Alvin had no idea what he had been talking about when he called him that. After all, wasn't a conquerer supposed to be tough and intimidating? When Hiccup looked at himself, even he about laughed at the idea of being called a conquerer.

"Yeah, yeah," he huffed, waving the sarcasm off of Snotlout's comment.

"What's wrong, 'cos, don't think you can?" Snotlout laughed.

That was when they went downhill. Literally. The twins fighting hadn't escalated, but Ruffnut was on top of Tuffnut and the boy, stumbling along, tripped. Knocking into Hiccup, the three of them fell off to the right side of the trail they were taking. It was a long and rather steep hill, stretching down to a cliff, which was where the three were rolling to now. Hiccup's prosthetic foot suddenly got caught between two boulders as he tumbled down, yanking him to a stop and causing him to cry out in pain as his knee strained, being pulled away from the prosthetic, which clung on tightly. He watched as Ruff and Tuff went nearer the edge. A tree growing along the side separated the two from tumbling to their deaths.

Tuffnut managed to wrap himself around the tree, but his sister missed it by an inch. Her body vanished over the side. Tuffnut was too busy trying to untangle himself to notice, but Hiccup and Astrid both cried her name at the same time, which alerted him to what had happened.

"Fishlegs, help Hiccup," Astrid instructed as she, the large boy, and Snotlout slowly began to make their way down the hill, treading carefully so as not to trip or slip to meet the same fate as Ruffnut.

Toothless paced up at the top on the path, seeming to try and decide

if he should follow. After a moment, he decided to come down and help. He dug his claws into the ground as he picked his way down the grassy bank, trying to keep himself from potentially sliding down and hitting anyone else. He followed Fishlegs over to Hiccup, but was much slower. His heavy form was being pulled by gravity to go tumbling away but his claws held him firm. The grassy bank was weak, however, and Toothless had to be sure he had a firm grip before continuing to move.

"Stay still, I got you," Fishlegs instructed, using the boulder to keep himself from falling. He examined Hiccup's leg, trying to figure out the best way to get it out without breaking something or hurting Hiccup.

Hiccup tried to turn around and look but pain in his knee told him he was lying to awkwardly. "Can you get it, Legs?"

"Just hold on," the boy responded, reaching down.

Hiccup did his best to ignore what Fishlegs might be doing by looking down to Astrid, Snotlout, and Tuffnut. Snotlout helped Tuffnut stand while Astrid leaned over the edge, gripping a root of the tree sticking. The blond girl let out a gasp of surprise.

"Ruffnut!" she called.

A voice called up from below, "Astrid! Help!"

Hiccup felt relief wash over him when he recognized the voice of Ruffnut. Then he felt a yank and his body began to slide forward down the hill, free of the boulder. He came to a stop when he felt Fishlegs grab his right leg, holding him in place. Hiccup turned around and thanked him, feeling much safer. He managed to push himself to a sitting position and, with Fishlegs' help, he was soon standing, clutching the other boy's arm to prevent from going tumbling.

"I can't reach her," Astrid announced.

Tuffnut moved to the ledge and reached down with one arm while grabbing the same tree root that Astrid was clutching. "Snotlout, hold my feet."

"I can't hold your feet and not fall off the edge at the same time. It's still too steep here," Snotlout responded, his hands firm against the bark of the tree.

Tuffnut looked back at him angrily. "Dude, Astrid and I are both sitting on the edge and we haven't fallen. Don't be such a wuss."

"Yeah, because you're holding a root, dumbass!"

Hiccup suddenly realized how dumb he was being. He turned around and glanced up, noticing Toothless almost to him. Hiccup struggled to move away from Fishlegs, then got down on all fours and began to crawl up to his dragon. They reached each other and Hiccup pulled himself into the saddle. It felt more familiar to him than anything and he quickly put his foot in the stirrup and latched his other foot into place.

"All right, bud, lets get Ruff," he said, patting Toothless' neck.

The dragon's wings grabbed for air, pushing on it and pulling himself up. Hiccup breathed in the breeze as Toothless flew out and over the edge. He veered down and came up under Ruffnut, who was clinging to a root of the tree that was sticking out of the ledge from under the ground. Her feet dangled in the air, but she smiled with relief when she saw Hiccup and Toothless.

"Drop down, we got you," Hiccup instructed.

Ruffnut released the root and, for an instant, was falling through the air. She landed on Toothless' back in a rather ungraceful manner, but balanced herself. She moved up behind Hiccup and held tight to him as Toothless flew back up. He soared up the hill to the path, where he landed down. Ruffnut was clutching Hiccup with a fiery intensity, but she released once they were on solid ground. She moved to get off of Toothless' back when she noticed something.

"It that our boat?"

Hiccup looked out and noticed what Ruffnut saw. The island curved around and across some expanse of water before them, the other side sat there, sandy beaches visible. A boat was up on the beach, obviously docked. Hiccup gave it a couple look overs before he finally came to the conclusion that it wasn't their boat. It looked familiar, though.

He hopped off and stood beside Ruffnut, staring down the boat as the others managed to make their way back up the hill. Soon, they were all standing together, Snotlout and Tuffnut panting while Fishlegs collapsed to the ground in a heap, letting out a loud groan. Hiccup pointed at the ship and they all turned.

Astrid stiffened. "That looks like Alvin's ship!"

"Alvin's?" Fishlegs stammered. "Oh, shit..."

"We have to get my dad," Hiccup said instantly, turning and starting to jog back up the hill. Astrid was quick to follow along with Toothless and Ruffnut.

Tuffnut, Snotlout, and Fishlegs were just starting to get moving when someone snatched Hiccup. He felt strong arms gripping his shoulders and heard Toothless let out an angry roar. Astrid and Ruffnut let out startled cries, and Hiccup could only assume someone had grabbed each of them, as well. He kicked and squirmed, but nothing was effective to get out of his captor's grip.

"Calm down, Dragon Conquerer. And tell your dragon to stop his roaring or I'll slit your throat," a deep voice spoke into his ear.

Hiccup felt his body go cold and rigid. Only one man could be holding him and say that. He felt his stomach jump to his throat, which he realized had cold steel pressed against it, and churn wildly while his heart sank into a pit. He went limp, not able to see Alvin's face as he held him too still, but was able to look over his shoulder and

see Ruffnut and Astrid being held, swords against their throats, hovering dangerously close. Toothless sensed the situation and quieted, looking around with wide, fearful eyes, unsure what he could do. The other boys were standing still a little ways down the path, unmoving. Two more burly men stood behind them and Hiccup could see they had swords pointed out, showing Snotlout, Fishlegs, and Tuffnut that if they tried to run, they would be injured.

"What do you want, Alvin?" Hiccup finally worked up the nerve to ask.

He felt the man's beard brushing his cheek as Alvin leaned forward to speak in his ear. The gruff, icy voice was like venom and Hiccup winced.

"You."

\* \* \*

><p>Uhh... yeah...?</p>

No flames, but constructive criticism is okay.

Lets see how this goes 8D

Love,

Deyoxis

## 2. A Little Convincing

I doubt I'll ever update this quick again, but I had a lot more free time today than I expected x3

Plus, this chapter is a wee bit shorter.

\*\*Chapter Two: A Little Convincing\*\*

Hiccup wouldn't lie. He wanted to scream. He wanted to scream so loud that his father would hear and come rushing to help. The blade jerked, though, touching his skin and causing pressure along his throat. He sucked in some air, trying to bring his neck in so that it wouldn't get sliced. He heard Alvin laughing throatily in his ear and the man's beard went from tickling his cheek to rubbing it with rough, brittle strands.

"If I'm all you want, let the others go," Hiccup said, managing to put bravery into words he didn't feel brave about.

Alvin pulled away. He was holding Hiccup in front of him and Hiccup was facing towards the cliffside that Ruffnut had nearly perished over. Hiccup couldn't see his attacker, but he could turn his head to look at the others. He did this, but wished he hadn't. They looked petrified, even Astrid. Alvin began to push Hiccup towards them, nearly shoving him down the path. Hiccup stumbled and started to fall into the sword, but the traitor pulled it away and clenched his fist tight around Hiccup's arm. Hiccup stopped short of hitting the ground, his left shoulder nearly yanked out of socket as Alvin held him. The man pulled Hiccup back to his feet and they continued to

walk. As they passed Toothless, Alvin moved the sword back across Hiccup's throat.

"Tell your dragon to stay put. If he follows us, one of you isn't going to live," the Viking spat.

Hiccup looked over at Toothless, who whined and lowered his head, moving into a lying down position. He watched Hiccup with wary eyes, searching for something to do that could help his friend but finding nothing. Hiccup smiled at him gently, trying to reassure him with comfort that Hiccup didn't even feel.

"It's okay, bud. Just wait here. We'll be back."

Toothless let out another whine, one that sounded more pained. It made Hiccup's stomach clench and fury welled inside him. Why was he so important to Alvin the Treacherous? He alone had nothing to give the outcasts. No strength, no power, and without Toothless he was just a scrawny boy. Hell if he'd ever actually help Alvin with anything anyways.

"Come along, boys, to the ship," Alvin called to him men.

They all proceeded to move. Astrid and Ruffnut were getting nearly dragged along, much like Hiccup. Fishlegs, Snotlout, and Tuffnut walked side by side, ignoring the tips of the swords that the outsiders attempted to jab at them every once and a while. Hiccup tried to keep with Alvin's desired pace, being pushed along ahead with the sword against his throat. It was hard to move fast enough to not get shoved by Alvin but be slow enough to not walk into the cold, sharp blade.

They went along in silence, following the path that would take them down to the beach where Alvin's ship was. Hiccup found his gaze looking it over, wondering how it was here when Toothless and the other dragons had burned it down a couple weeks ago.

"Eyeing my new ship, eh? Can't you see the fancy new paint and wood? We worked hard on it to make it all beautiful for when we came to pick you up," Alvin laughed, not sounding thrilled at all.

Hiccup chuckled awkwardly. "It's gorgeous. I feel so special."

The sarcasm in his voice earned him a punch upside the head. Hiccup felt like his world was about to sink into darkness, but it didn't. He managed to hold out, though his vision blurred for a couple moments. He was pushed along blindly until everything became clear again. When he managed to glance around, he found himself sitting on the floor of Alvin's ship, his hands bound together behind him. Astrid, Fishlegs, Snotlout, and the twins were in the same position, lined up alongside him against one side of the ship.

"Lets go, men. We've got ground to cover," Alvin ordered, stomping his way up and down the deck as he commanded his small crew.

As the ship finally set off, Hiccup began to feel nauseous. The wild rocking of the boat didn't help as the Isle of Berk began to slowly start shrinking. Hiccup looked up and noticed a black form walking along the edge of the cliff where they had been. A long, sullen wail split the air and Hiccup knew it was Toothless, crying out for him.

He was glad Toothless was safe, though, that was what mattered. Now he just had to save himself and the others.

It seemed like an eternity of silence before someone worked up the nerve to speak.

"Why are we getting dragged along into this?" Tuffnut demanded.  
"We're not the Dragon Conquerers."

Hiccup recalled that Alvin never answered him earlier about that. He looked over at the man, who had obviously heard Tuffnut's question but was choosing to ignore it. Hiccup slammed his prosthetic on the deck to get his attention. Alvin looked over, seemingly bored but attentive.

"You didn't answer me back there earlier about that. Why are you bringing the others? You said it was me you wanted. What are they to you?" he questioned, his voice shaking a bit but he managed to get all the words out.

He put on his best look of determination as the Viking man strode over. Hiccup had to crane his head back to look Alvin in the face. Ironic that white puffy clouds floated along behind him in a vast sea of blue. It was way too nice of a day out to be kidnapped.

"The reason I'm bringing them, Dragon Conquerer, is because I believe it's going to take a little more to persuade you to assist me than just by asking you," Alvin said. His voice was so cold and deadly sounding that Hiccup felt himself a little shaken just from the words. He refused to tear his gaze away, trying to outlast Alvin in the stare off.

The something occurred to him. "What use am I to you anyways?"

Alvin laughed. His bellow must have been a cue to the other men as they all burst into a round of throaty chuckles, though they seemed confused. They hadn't been listening to the conversation, they didn't know what was going on. They just knew that their leader was laughing and that meant that they should probably share the same emotion. As soon as Alvin's laughter trailed to die down, the other men stopped and hurried back to whatever they were working on.

"Why, Dragon Conquerer, you're going to do just that. You're going to help us conquer some dragons. Or better yet, we'd like to ride some dragons."

Alvin had bent down while speaking this, getting up close into Hiccup's face. The angry glint in his eyes made Hiccup wince, but his treacherous breath made the poor boy recoil. Hiccup pushed himself up against the side of the ship, holding his breath and turning away. The rancid smell burned his eyes, too.

Alvin, seeing Hiccup's move as more fear than disgust, grinned and pulled away, turning to check how much further they had to go.

"Hiccup," Astrid hissed from his right. She twisted her body enough to allow her hands, though tied behind her back, to smack him hard on the arm. "Don't act like a baby!"

Hiccup, able to breath again, shook his head and looked over at Astrid. "It wasn't his words that scared me Astrid. The man's breath smells worse than boots on Boot Day."

"Is that even possible?" Snotlout asked, incredulous.

Fishlegs shook his head. "I don't think so."

"Well, it is," Hiccup muttered.

"When I woke up this morning, I was planning on having a good day. Not to almost fall off a cliff and die and not to get captured by Outsiders and die. Either way, I wasn't planning on dying, so, Hiccup, you better have a plan," Ruffnut threatened.

Tuffnut agreed. "Yeah. If the guy's breath is as bad as you say it is, I want to get home before I have to suffer. Screw being Berk's biggest hero. I'm fine just being the other guy. Doesn't put me in sucky situations."

"Thanks, Tuff, you really know how to cheer a guy on," Hiccup moaned, searching his brain for an idea. A plan. Anything. So far he had nothing. There wasn't much they could do while just stuck on Alvin's boat.

The rest of the boat ride about killed them all. Not because Alvin threatened them or anything. No. Because Fishlegs sang to himself in what was supposed to be a quiet, but really wasn't, tone. The large boy's words stumbled over themselves and crashed into each other as he sang nervously, losing tune and never really sounding even decent. Everyone besides Hiccup told him to stop or they would harm him in some way, but that only made Fishlegs worry more and sing even worse.

"Fishlegs," Hiccup finally tried. "Just close your eyes and think of something nice."

The boy nodded and tried it. Soon he was in tears, the water streaming down his face in buckets. "I miss MEATLUG!"

"Or not," Hiccup sighed.

The boat lurched and the teens all went flying to right, crashing into each other before coming to a stop in a heap. They lay there for a moment, groaning in pain where they had been struck by the limbs of each other, unable to catch or stop themselves with their hands tied.

Hiccup was underneath Tuffnut, but that didn't stop Alvin from seizing his right leg and pulling him out, dangling him up in the air like he was nothing. He cried out in surprise before just letting himself hang, unable to kick around to get free. As Alvin released him, he bent forward so as to fall onto his back. Pain jolted through his body and another wave of nausea swept him. Alvin kicked him to his feet and then repeated the earlier process of shoving Hiccup along in the direction he wanted him to go.

Off the boat, Hiccup could see that they definitely weren't on Berk anymore. It was like a tall, grey, dead mountain surrounded by a beach of a similar color. Everything seemed void of life and color.

Dark black caves littered the side of the mountain like spots. Smoke billowed out of a couple that glowed with a pale, orange light, signaling some sort of life among the barren landscape. A couple more Vikings were walking around, dirtied and haggard looking. They were all outcasts.

"Get going, Dragon Conquerer," Alvin snapped, his fist slamming in between Hiccup's shoulder blades.

He was sent sprawling forward, the pain relighting itself. He scrambled to his feet as fast as he could manage without his hands before trying to pick his way along to the cave that Alvin wanted him to go. If it wasn't hard enough to walk on sand with two feet, Hiccup wasn't sure how he was managing when the metal of his left fake foot keep sinking hard and fast into the ground. He jerked it back up each time, looking like he was almost limping along.

He heard Snotlout curse angrily while Tuffnut said something about how they would regret touching the world's most deadly weapon. Astrid and Ruffnut just went along quietly while Fishlegs whimpered, tears still decorating his cheeks with a shining gleam.

Deciding that Hiccup went much too slow for his tastes, Alvin wrapped a beefy hand around his arm. He began to yank him along, jerking him forward some with each step while Hiccup hopped on one foot, the other barely having time to hit the ground before he was being pulled forward again. They made their way through a cave. Each little noise made bounced off the walls, echoing through the tunnel like thunder. Water dripped from the ceilings, giving the place a cold, damp chill. They began to ascend and it felt like forever before they reached a room in the upper quarter of the mountain. Alvin hauled Hiccup over to a large door that had been built to separate the room from the outside ledge. Upon opening it, Alvin tossed Hiccup out onto it before striding out himself.

Hiccup had landed on his left arm, the one that Alvin had been dragging him along by. It had grown to such a fiery intensity of agony that he could no longer feel it. Landing on it made it explode with a numbing sensation and Hiccup groaned, rolling onto his stomach and attempting to stand.

Alvin untied his hands and allowed Hiccup's arms to weakly push him to his feet. He wobbled unsteadily for an instant before gaining his footing and looking up at the traitor with narrowed eyes. He was annoyed of this. Did Alvin honestly think that he was going to just give him what he wanted.

Three men brought Astrid, Ruffnut, Tuffnut, Snotlout, and Fishlegs out. They lined them up against the side of the mountain outside the door, holding their rusted swords out to keep any of them from bolting. Astrid's face was hard, her lips a thin line of anger that was pulsing through her body. Snotlout clenched his fists and stood straight, but a gleam in his eyes revealed terror. Tuffnut and Ruffnut did their best to look passive, neither trying to appear phased by the situation. Fishlegs' legs were shaking so badly that his knees nearly made noise as they conked together.

A roar alerted Hiccup to the approaching dragons.

"Ah, right on time," Alvin muttered. He was looking at the sky with a

grim expression. He turned to Hiccup. "You better show us how to ride them. Now."

Hiccup threw all his courage into one spot and grabbed it tight, trying to hold onto it. "Make me!"

Alvin looked over and nodded his head. One of the men smirked and then turned to Astrid. He pulled his arm back and then threw his fist against her face. She was sent spinning off to the side before landing with a heavy thud against the ground, unable to catch herself. She bit her lip, clearly trying to keep from crying out. The left side of her face where the man had punched was already deepening to red and swelling some.

If that wasn't enough, the man then turned to Snotlout and grabbed his face, knocking off his helmet. He shoved it back, cracking the boy's head against the mountainside. As he went limp, falling unconscious, Snotlout's body fell to the ground, blood smearing the mountain behind him. Ruffnut and Tuffnut grew terrified at that moment, but only tensed.

"Bring it, Snotbrain!" Tuffnut said, deciding that if he was going down, he wasn't going to go down without a fight.

One of the other men grabbed him and began to drag him and his sister to the edge. He raised them up, dangling them over the air. Tuffnut cried out, kicking wildly and trying to swing himself towards land.

"Not again," Ruffnut hissed, copying her brother.

Hiccup had been still watching Astrid, Snotlout, and Fishlegs. Fishlegs had passed out while Astrid was clearly still awake, but lay still, breathing slowly and recovering as well as she could. Snotlout was out cold, bleeding slowly from the back of his head. The crimson liquid made Hiccup sick and he felt his breathing coming out a little shorter when he saw how serious Alvin was being. Looking over, he saw the man holding the twins, who were panicking, struggling to try and free their hands from their bonds.

"All right stop! I'll teach you," Hiccup shouted, running towards the man holding his friends and trying to pull his arms back.

The man laughed, complying once Alvin nodded at him. Hiccup watched with relief as Ruffnut and Tuffnut were brought back to safety over land. They were herded back to the wall.

Alvin snorted. "Show him what might happen if he doesn't comply."

The man nodded and turned to the twins. Both, though fear was still evident clear across their faces, stood up as straight as they could. The man seemed to contemplate which one to hurt. Once he had chosen, his fist balled and was pulled back before he released it, sending it crushing into Tuffnut's gut. The boy let out a cry and crumpled to the ground, doubled over and gasping for air that had been knocked out of him. Ruffnut bent down but with her hands tied, she wasn't sure what to do. It made Hiccup sick to watch, but at least the were all right.

"Hold on!" Hiccup suddenly said. "Before we begin, at least bandage Snotlout's head. If he keeps bleeding, he could die."

Alvin seemed about to protest, but decided that it would be more suited if all five of the other teens were still alive. He ordered the third outcast to bandage his head. The man vanished in the cave and returned a couple moments later with a wrap. He bent down and put it around Snotlout's skull, making sure it was good and tight, preventing a further excess of blood flow.

Hiccup felt worry and fear and terror sitting like a stone in his stomach. He gulped down the lump in his throat and looked over at Alvin. His fists clenched and unclenched warily as he watched the Viking man searching the sky for the dragons that were out there. As a monstrous Nightmare came swinging into view, he let out a cry and the creature swooped down, opening its large jaws and ready to shoot fire.

Hiccup panicked, knowing he wasn't able to work with the dragon while it was on the attack mode. He jumped to the side as the dragon shot a sticky spit of fire at them. Alvin sidestepped and watched the ground where he stood scorch black. He roared with anger and looked over at Hiccup.

"Dragon Conquerer! Do something now or face the consequences!"

Hiccup scrambled to his feet, feeling sweat break out along his forehead as he searched the area around him. The Nightmare was circling overhead, its cry piercing the air and sending shivers down the spines of all who heard it. Hiccup looked up at it, biting his bottom lip and trying to figure out how he could get the dragon to land and calm down. It would be so much easier if he had Toothless to help him!

"Dragon Conquerer!" Alvin shouted again, his voice clearly agitated.

Hiccup wheeled to him. "I can't do anything with it flying around above us. I need to get close to it without it blowing fire at my face!"

Alvin seethed, what was visible of his face burning redder than the Nightmare's fire. He reached for his sword, which he had sheathed. Pulling it out, Hiccup heard it slice the air. Alvin turned and made his way towards the Viking teens. He brandished the sword above him, his eyes locking onto Ruffnut.

Ruffnut stood suddenly and seemed to pull courage out from the pits of her being. "Let's make this a fair fight, at least. Let me have a sword. Or do you think this is the only way you can beat me, Barfbag?"

Alvin laughed cruelly, shaking his head at her. He turned her around and broke off her binds. He motioned for one of his men to hand her a sword, which they supplied. He held the sword out to Ruffnut, who took it slowly, seeming wary.

"No, Ruff, let me take him," Astrid said, standing to her feet but having to lean against the mountainside for support. She was woozy,

unable to really see clearly and wasn't even looking in the right direction when she addressed Ruffnut.

Ruffnut just shook her head. "I got this, Astrid."

Hiccup felt his body lurch forward like he was going to run forward and stop the fight. He also felt the urge to run to Astrid. He wanted to hold her up, help her stand while she continued to recover from the blow. He wanted to examine the swollen bruise on her face and make it better. She was tough, though, and didn't need him. If he didn't do something, though, Ruffnut would be dead soon.

As Alvin swung at her, Ruffnut turned and fled, causing him to hiss under his breath. He followed her, for she really had nowhere to go out on the ledge. He swung with mighty blows, barely missing her. Each swing made Hiccup more nervous than he was before. Ruffnut could only dodge for so long.

"Stop it, Alvin! Please," he begged.

Alvin turned at him with a wicked glance. "This is what you get for not doing what I told you to, Dragon Conquerer!"

A low growl alerted Hiccup that he was no longer standing off to the side alone. He spun around and saw the Nightmare along the edge, teeth wide open, gleaming in the pale light and looking sharper than Hookfang's. The Nightmare's claws scratched long and deafening against the stones, but the dragon made no move to attack any further. Hiccup felt relief wash him and he turned back to Alvin and Ruffnut.

Ruffnut had lost her sword. She was on her butt, trying to move backwards fast enough to avoid Alvin's blows. He shot for her head and she jerked back. The tip of his sword sliced a deep, long, and jagged cut into her cheek, though, causing her to cry out in surprise and pain. She reached up and pressed her palms hard against the wound, trying to stop the fresh round of blood. It oozed, hot and sticky out between her fingers and dripped down her arm. Alvin raised his sword to do the final blow when Astrid ran over and attempted to punch him.

The girl, though her left eye was almost shut from the swelling, seemed to be seeing and thinking a lot clearer. Well, as clear as one who was brave enough to try and punch a beast of a Viking man out while he held a sword. She stepped back, holding up her fists as a clear sign that she would take him on. She had somehow managed to get out of her bindings, freeing her hands. Alvin was about to turn on her when Hiccup called his name.

The traitor turned around to see that Hiccup had made his way closer to the Nightmare. He lowered his sword, stern gaze watching.

Hiccup let soothing words escape his mouth in a rush. He held his hands up, showing he had no weapons and he meant no harm. He smiled gently, looking the giant creature in the eyes. The Nightmare hissed lightly, but closed its mouth and watched with curiosity. Hiccup came closer and tentatively reached one hand out to the Nightmare's nose. It tensed, but sniffed him before relaxing. Hiccup smiled a bit brighter, placing his hand on the Nightmare's nose beneath the horn. The creature let out a soft sound, something along the lines of

purring, and even moved a bit closer to Hiccup, accepting him quickly.

"By Thor," Alvin breathed, then grinned, sheathing his sword.

Hiccup looked back to check and make sure his friends were all right. Snotlout and Fishlegs were still out. Astrid had moved to Ruffnut and was checking her wound. Tuffnut was sitting up straight, though he looked like he might get sick at any moment. Alvin began approaching Hiccup with long strides, but stopped a bit of a ways off, wary of getting too close to the Nightmare.

"See, isn't this better, Dragon Conquerer?" the man sneered. "All it took was a little convincing."

\* \* \*

><p>Yep.</p>

Turning out a bit darker than I originally thought.

Whoo!

Reviews?

Love,

Deyoxis

### 3. Trust

Whoa... I must not be studying enough, I don't normally update this quickly multiple times in a row.

Thanks to my lovely reviewers! Y'all are too kind :D It's good to hear that you all feel I am hitting the characters right. That was the biggest thing I was worried about when I started this story. I also want to take the moment to apologize for some of my (incredibly dumb) errors in the first two chapters... I left out some words and reused the same adjectives WAY too much for my normal writing xD I'm glad it apparently wasn't too noticeable to point out, but they're there, those dumb mistakes... Haha.

\*\*Just me:\*\* I have this story taking place a good while after Gift of the Night Fury and whatnot, so I imagine the babies are grown up well enough to not need their parents' care quite so much. But maybe they're having the parents/children time right now, hm? As for your second thought, you'll have to keep reading to see what way this story will roll.

I'm sitting outside on a stone bench as I write these. There's a tree above me and a squirrel just threw some nuts down at me, nearly hitting me. I'm terrified of the stupid squirrels here... I just turned around and one is sitting there. Looking at me. I think he's plotting to eat me.

\*\*Chapter Three: Trust  
><strong>

>Seeing that Hiccup would be true to his word, Alvin had decided they would begin the training the next day so that he could gather some men and more dragons could come. For now, he merely asked Hiccup to get the dragons to return tomorrow around the same time without attacking, but to do so down on the beach so that there was more room. The ledge seemed to practically shrink with the Nightmare's presence. Hiccup, reluctant to bring the poor dragons back, did as he was asked for the wellbeing of his friends. Looking at them now, he felt responsibility weighing heavily on his shoulders.<p>

"This way," Alvin commanded as the Nightmare took off into the fading daylight. He motioned Hiccup to the door, which the boy then started towards.

The other three of Alvin's men each fetched the others. One herded the conscious Tuffnut, Ruffnut, and Astrid after Hiccup and Alvin while the other two grabbed Snotlout and Fishlegs. The man carrying Fishlegs had to give up trying to lift the boy after a couple minutes and just grabbed his arms, pulling him across the ground inside.

"Where to, Alvin?" the man dragging Fishlegs' asked.

Despite the situation they were in, Ruffnut and Tuffnut had to chuckle silently at the sight. The movement was too much for Tuffnut's stomach, however, so he stopped after only a second or so to clutch his abdomen, Ruffnut having freed his hands from his bonds. His face contorted into a strong look of pain and even Ruffnut looked at him sorrowfully.

Alvin's fierce glare landed on the man like it was obvious. "The dungeons."

When Alvin had turned away, the man's face fell. Hiccup noticed this and figured this meant the dungeons had to be far down below the mountain. The man would have to lug Fishlegs all the way there. Served him right. He was the man that had punched Astrid and cracked Snotlout's head. Hiccup felt no sympathy for him as he turned to follow Alvin down the caves.

Berk and its surrounding areas were always cold. Even with it having been a sunny day out, barely any warmth was spread through the air. As they traveled further into the heart of the mountain, though, the outside world began to seem like a hot spring in Hiccup's mind. The damp chill of the mountain sapped every ounce of heat from his body and his breath curled around him as thick steam. He wrapped his arms around himself, his teeth beginning to chatter. He looked back to see Astrid, Ruffnut, and Tuffnut all struggling to stay warm, as well. Tuffnut had his hands buried up his armpits while Astrid and Ruffnut kept close to each other, trying to share what heat they had left.

Suddenly, the cave they were currently traveling down opened up. It was a large, somewhat circular room. A couple torches burned faintly, lining the walls and giving off only little light and barely adding any warmth. The worst part was Hiccup noticed chains against the back wall and knew instantly what Alvin was going to do.

"You're going to chain a bunch of young teenagers down here? Like we're some sort of threat?" he tried to demand, but was shivering too

much for the words to flow out evenly.

Alvin turned to him, dark eyes penetrating and glowing somewhat from the torchlight. "Well, you're not an ally, Dragon Conquerer."

"Stop calling me that," Hiccup hissed. "I didn't conquer the dragons."

Alvin only laughed cruelly and reached out, snagging Hiccup's tender left arm. He yanked him forward and bent down, grabbing one of the locks of the chain. He snapped it around Hiccup's wrist, pulling out a key and locking it. He then shoved Hiccup into the wall.

Hiccup felt the cold mountain greet him as a horrible force of solidness and chilled rock. His whole body, growing numb from cold and pain, finally gave in to wariness and he dropped, his body hitting the ground hard. He didn't even try to move as Astrid, Snotlout, Ruffnut, Tuffnut, and Fishlegs were all chained, as well. Astrid sat down beside him, placing her unchained hand on his back soothingly. She sent a hateful gaze up at the outcasts, but they only laughed. The three of Alvin's men filed out while Alvin turned to Hiccup's small form. Astrid tensed up, her fists bawling as she prepared to fight if she needed to.

"Calm down, little bitch," Alvin sneered, her eyes flickering from her to Hiccup, who attempted to sit up meekly. "I don't call you the Conqueror of Dragons, boy. I call you the Dragon Conquerer. Singular."

Hiccup, sitting upright with his back now against the wall, narrowed his eyes questioningly. If Alvin was speaking of Toothless, then the man was surely confused. Toothless was his best friend.

Seeing the boy's confusion, Alvin smirked. He bent down and tapped Hiccup's prosthetic leg. "How'd you get this, boy?"

Hiccup caught on. Alvin hadn't known that Hiccup had ridden Toothless to stop the Red Death. All Alvin knew was the Hiccup had somehow defeated the giant monster. That alone had been enough to assume that Hiccup then also knew how to defeat all dragons. That was why Alvin originally wanted Hiccup. Because he could defeat all dragons. Upon realizing the truth, Alvin had changed plans. Alvin didn't want to defeat the dragons that raided Outcast Island. He wanted to use them.

Hiccup was, essentially, his tool to mass destruction. Alvin was going to destroy Berk with dragons.

Alvin bellowed, howling with laughter as he saw understanding and misery dawn across Hiccup's face. The noise echoed around the cave like loud drums that warned of an oncoming army. It startled Fishlegs awake, who looked around, puzzled and uncertain of what was going on.

Hiccup felt his heart beating against his chest like it was going to explode. He empty stomach fought to relieve itself and he had to swallow multiple times to keep from throwing up anything his stomach could find up. His shallow breathing alerted Astrid that something was severely wrong and she pulled Hiccup close to her in a hug.

Shutting his eyes, Hiccup let himself drift away. The sound of Alvin's laugh faded into the background as darkness consumed him. He had no dreams, only nightmares. Fire blazed across his vision and the whole world rank of the dead or dying. He was standing at the center of it all, hearing his name being called as people begged him to help. Surely the hero of Berk could save them! Hiccup was panicking, eyes wide as he searched for Toothless, his dad, Astrid, or any of his friends.

Turning and weaving his way through the chaos and destruction, Hiccup eventually saw someone familiar.

"Dad!" he screamed, running forward. He bent down by his father, who was sprawled out on his back, face staring towards the heavens. Hiccup searched Stoick's face for any sign of life. Nothing. The man's eyes were open and soft, no gleam of life showing in their depths. Hiccup reached out tenderly, thinking maybe it was a trick. "Dad, no..."

A long wail of agony startled him awake and Hiccup's eyes flew open with the intention of finding Toothless to help him from whatever had just caused him to scream.

"Hiccup!" Astrid cried out in alarm, sitting up in a flash from where she had fallen asleep beside him.

Everything that had transpired the past many hours came crashing down on Hiccup as he realized that it had only been a dream. His father was not dead and Toothless had not just roared with pain. He was sucking in breaths, trying to regain his composure as he moved himself to lean back against the side of the cave. He let his head fall back, skull resting against the wall, eyes closing as he let his heart rate slow.

Astrid came up beside him, looking at him with blue eyes full of worry. When Hiccup reopened his eyes and looked at her, she asked, "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine," Hiccup stammered. He felt burning hot, sweat beading his forehead. As he thought about how hot he felt, though, the icy grip of the cave began to rework itself on his body, plunging him into cold again. "Just a bad dream. How are you and the others?"

Astrid's eye was still swollen, but it looked like it had gone down just enough that she could see out of it again. It was a deep, dark purple, standing out against her pale complexion. It was large, encompassing her eye all the way out to her temple.

Turning to look at the others, Hiccup noticed they were all asleep. Tuffnut was curled up, still clutching his stomach like it hurt. Ruffnut was resting her side, the injured cheek away from the stone floor. The cut wasn't bleeding anymore, stopped by the blood that had dried along the outside of her skin. Fishlegs looked peaceful while Snotlout didn't look comfortable at all.

Astrid glanced over them before looking back at Hiccup. "We all talked a bit while you fell asleep and after Alvin left. After what Alvin said, I figured out what he was planning and told the others. Fishlegs nearly peed himself. He was happy to drop out of the

conversation and just try to sleep. Tuffnut's stomach is rather bruised. Ruff says it's the same color as my face. Ruff's cheek stopped bleeding, as you can see. I think she'll be fine. She's just lucky to be alive. Snotlout's pretty out of it. I think he's suffering a massive headache."

Hiccup nodded, then turned and looked at his feet... er... foot. And the prosthetic. Suddenly, the Hiccup that had earned the fake foot, the hero Hiccup, seemed farther away than ever. Back with Toothless on Berk.

Astrid took his hand and squeezed it, trying to offer some solace of comfort. "Don't worry, Hiccup. We'll all get off this island and be back home before we know it. Maybe tomorrow. We're all tough. And you're amazing at leading us. You'll think of something."

Hiccup managed a dry chuckle, shaking his head at himself. "I'm about to teach Berk's greatest enemy how to ride Berk's former greatest enemy. I don't have my dragon here with me and my army is five other teenaged kids against an island of Viking men. I better think of something."

\* \* \*

><p>Toothless stood along the cliff edge, his claws digging into the ground hard. He remained there for many moments, even after Alvin's ship vanished on the horizon, taking his best friend and the other humans with it. He had let out a mournful cry, scared that it might be the last thing he would ever get to say to Hiccup. He needed to figure out something. If he didn't, he knew quite well that his owner might be dead soon.</p>

Turning from the cliffside, he made his way back up the steep hill and to the path. Taking off into a bounding run, he charged his way through the fields, startling sheep and surprising some of the Vikings that were out enjoying the day. They watched him with wide, curious gazes, not understanding how they could possibly be seeing the Night Fury without Hiccup around. Toothless ignored them, only intent on finding one person. Stoick.

Finally, the main section of the village came into view. He slowed as he neared the Haddock house, sniffing and searching for any sign of the chief. When he couldn't locate the man, he decided the next best place to check would be the Great Hall. Feeling like his running was too slow, he jumped into the air, beating his wings hard and then gliding a short distance before landing and repeating the process. Without Hiccup, he couldn't get very far, but it was faster than just plain running.

As he climbed his way up the steps, he let out a loud roar, hoping that, if Stoick was inside, he would hear him. Worry pumped through his body as he came up to the large entrance, gazing up only for a moment. The doors were closed and he knew that he wasn't very good at opening the door, but had to try. He scratched at the handle until a claw hooked it and he managed to yank it open. As the door swung wide, he jumped in, eyes darting about before locating a small group of men, Stoick standing amongst them.

He let out a low whine and trotted over, pushing through the men and up to Stoick. He continued to growl lightly, trying to convey his

worry and fear for Hiccup to the man. Stoick blinked at him, misunderstanding.

"Ah, Toothless. You upset because Hiccup's out playing with the other Vikings? It's okay, boy, he'll be around tomorrow," the man chuckled, hands on his hips as he looked at the dragon squarely in the eyes.

Toothless shook his head and snorted, whining again and trying to motion for Stoick to come with him. If he could take the man outside and point out across the ocean, maybe he could get the village leader to comprehend him. Stoick, however, couldn't quite figure out what Toothless was trying to tell him. He narrowed his eyes, shaking his head. "I don't know what you're trying to say, Toothless. Look, just tell Hiccup whatever it is later tonight, okay? He'll know what you need."

Toothless became frustrated and growled at Stoick, agitation flashing across his eyes. The Night Fury was about to reach out and grab Stoick to try and force him outside, but he was getting pushed back and shooed away by the Viking men. Figuring that Stoick wouldn't catch on until later, when Hiccup didn't come home, Toothless decided to find someone who would understand him for the time being. Maybe they could come up with an idea that they could use once Stoick was on board, or even better, an idea to let Stoick know what exactly had occurred.

Turning and fleeing the Great Hall, Toothless knew exactly where to find Stormfly, Hookfang, Meatlug, Barf, and Belch. The four other dragons (if you included Barf and Belch as one dragon) weren't always the brightest dragons, but they were trustworthy and Toothless knew they cared for their humans.

It was a long journey when you couldn't fly. Toothless had to even swim a little ways to reach the small island just off the coast of the far side of Berk where his dragon friends met with other dragons from off the island. It was a dragon meeting place, so that Berk wasn't overwhelmed with the fire spitting creatures. Especially not with dragons that didn't particularly care to live with the Vikings. The dragons didn't hate the Vikings, not any more. They just had no desire to be among them like Toothless and the others did.

As Toothless began to pull himself onto the land of the small island, a Nadder looked up and noticed him, squealing loudly. The sun was beginning to sink by this time and the Nadder's colorful scales glittered in the fading daylight. She stomped up to Toothless, cocking her head at him, curious as to why he just swam all the way out to the island and Hiccup wasn't with him.

Toothless turned his attention to Stormfly, shaking some of the water off of his scales. The gaseous fire in his belly kept him warm despite the water's rather frigid temperatures.

Toothless roared softly about what had happened, informing the deadly Nadder and those listening.

Meatlug, Hookfang, Barf, and Belch all wandered over. The dragons they had been conversing with also watched on with amused expressions, unable to comprehend why the dragons cared so much for the teenagers. The onlookers included the mate's of Toothless'

friends, as well as a couple of their children that had dropped by to visit. The once puny babies that were so little at Snoggletog many weeks ago had grown into adolescents, able to care for themselves and nearly full grown. Other friends and Berk dragons were gathered around and some of the other Berk dragons came forward into the conversation, thinking maybe they could help.

When Toothless had finished his story, Stormfly asked him what they should do. Toothless wasn't sure what to say. He didn't know where the outcasts lived and without Hiccup, he couldn't get there anyways. He hung his head, claws digging into the ground as he searched for anything to say. He eventually looked back up and mentioned that they needed Stoick, as the chief might have an idea of Alvin's whereabouts. Stormfly and the others nodded, concurring with the idea.

Toothless hopped aboard Hookfang and the group took off to the sky. The other Berk dragons followed, bidding farewell to their friends before they all soared for the village. As they approached, Stormfly looked back, motioning with her head towards the Great Hall. The other dragons followed her lead.

Darkness had fallen. The moon was a slice of light in the sky. Stars were splattered across the dark canvas of dark blue but the Great Hall was lit up, showing that much of the village was inside, perhaps having dinner together.

The Berk dragons pried open the door and entered. They dodged small children running around excitedly and sought out Stoick. They were able to locate him by the hearty cheer of Gobber. Approaching, Toothless roared a greeting to get their attention.

"Hey, Toothless," Gobber greeted, wiping the froth of his beer off his mouth. "How are all of you dragons today?"

Stoick turned and looked at them with more concern. He was standing beside Gobber, hands behind his back and face creased with thoughts. He began twisting some fingers through his shaggy beard as he watched Toothless and the others come forward. As Toothless looked from Gobber to him, Stoick sighed rather loudly.

"I suppose this is what you were trying to tell me earlier," the chief commented, narrowing his eyes at the dragon. "Where are Hiccup and the other teens?"

Toothless looked at the others and decided that maybe they could act it out. He asked the dragons to act like their owners, which got him some funny looks. Barf and Belch caught on first and start bickering endlessly. Stormfly stood straight and puffed her chest out, trying to act like Astrid. Meatlug didn't need to do much while Hookfang roared, trying to talk to Stormfly, who ignored him.

Toothless looked back at Stoick to see if the man was following what was going on. Then he slunk around and jumped out, landing on Stormfly and growling loudly at her. He pretended to threaten her and then drag her off. The others pretended they were frightened and followed. Toothless stopped at the entrance to the Great Hall and looked around. By now, the whole village was staring at him like he'd gone mad, but Toothless didn't mind at that moment. He jumped up and then began to shake himself wildly, wondering if he looked like he

was in a boat.

"The kids were captured?" Gobber finally asked and Toothless nodded his head fiercely.

"Where were they taken? By who?" Stoick demanded, walking forward and pushing a few villagers that had come between him and Toothless to watch the dragon. He got up in Toothless' face and practically screamed, "By Thor, who took them?"

None of the dragons were sure how they could portray Alvin. They began to cry incessantly, all trying to get the man to know who they were talking about. Their fervent cries built up into a cacophony, flooding the Great Hall in a sea of noise. It was nigh deafening until Stoick raised a hand to quiet them. The hall then fell into such a deep silence that everyone went rigid, wondering that, if they spoke, if they would be yelled at.

"Was it a dragon?" Stoick asked softly.

Toothless shook his head.

"A Viking?"

Toothless shook his head, but then nodded. Then shook his head again. Then shrugged. Was Alvin still considered a Viking?

"An outcast?"

Toothless shook his head vigorously and came forward, nearly running into Stoick.

"Alvin?"

Toothless only managed to nod once before Stoick slammed his fists on a nearby table in absolute fury.

\* \* \*

><p>"Wake up, damn children," a voice grumbled, then Hiccup felt a boot to his back.</p>

He rolled onto his stomach, trying to escape his assailant, but was only hefted to his feet as the man grabbed the back of his shirt and hoisted him up. Hiccup was exceedingly displeased to be looking into the face of Alvin. A face that looked quite unhappy. The man dropped him and Hiccup just barely managed to land steadily. Astrid stood up beside him while the others stirred and clambered to their feet, as well.

Alvin handed them each a plate of... something. In Hiccup's opinion, it looked like some sort of gruel that not even a dragon would eat. He sniffed it and it about made him barf. The others gave it much the same look he was.

"What is this? Stuff you picked from between your toes?" Tuffnut groaned, sticking his tongue out.

Ruffnut faked a gagging motion. Hiccup couldn't believe that the two were brave enough to still joke in front of Alvin. After what

happened yesterday, he didn't think any of them would be brave enough to even speak.

Alvin turned and began to walk away. "I'll be back in a couple minutes."

He paused, his large form nearly taking up the cave he was about to walk into. He turned his head slightly and looked the twins up and down, both still snickering and staring at the food with devious grins. Alvin smirked, "I spent all night picking it out for you children."

As soon as he was gone and the sound of his footsteps could be heard no more, all six teens dropped their plates to the ground and slid them as far away as they could manage.

Hiccup, despite his stomach clawing viciously at his sides, demanding something to eat, found he didn't feel as hungry each time he glanced over at the gruel. He tried to keep his attention on his friends, who were all trying to occupy themselves so as to forget about where they were for the few precious minutes they had before Alvin's return.

"Thought of any plans?" Astrid asked, turning to him.

Hiccup sighed and shook his head. He brought his hands to his face and rubbed at his eyes, feeling weak and tired. It had been difficult to fall asleep on the ground. Not only was it like sleeping on ice, but it was just plain uncomfortable. He was aching all over his body, unable to determine whether it was from the sleeping position or Alvin throwing him about like a stuffed animal yesterday.

Astrid frowned. "Hiccup, we need to think of something."

Hiccup pulled his hands away, feeling exasperated. "Like what, Astrid? Even if we were to get off this island, we would need a boat. If we manage to take Alvin's boat, think about it. They'll come after us. They have weapons, Astrid. They'll just sink us."

Hiccup was prepared to die to protect Berk. He had proven that facing the Red Death. He couldn't bring himself to ask that of the others, however. Any sort of escape plan he had was tricky and had a greater chance of catastrophe rather than results. Plus, with the others being watched constantly, it was doubtful any of them could find the time to find a dragon that would let them ride them so they could fly away.

The minutes flew by much too quickly and Alvin was soon back. He and the three men from before, accompanied by two more, strode in with emotionless faces. Six men in total to watch six measly teenagers. The only teen who probably posed any sort of a threat was Astrid and that was if she could get a weapon. Fishlegs could have been a threat if he wasn't so scared. They were escorted outside to the beach.

The day wasn't like the previous one. Clouds rumbled overhead. They promised rain, their dark forms colliding with one another, tumbling as a giant mass over the island. Hiccup stood at the edge of the beach between the mountain and the sand, looking up at the sky, hoping that maybe the clouds would open up and it would storm for many days. Surly the dragons wouldn't return if it was raining?

"We have a couple hours before the dragons show up," Alvin cried.

When Hiccup looked out onto the beach, he realized something that, for some reason, hadn't stood out to him when he first walked out onto the beach. A couple scores of men were standing there, just before the water. They were all as large as Alvin, if not larger. They were dirtied and angry looking, seeming to blend together with their tangled beards and smeared skin.

"Shit," Tuffnut cursed from nearby.

Alvin turned and looked at Hiccup. "Begin teaching us, Dragon Conquerer."

Hiccup knew he could try and teach Alvin completely wrong. Then, when the dragons showed, the Vikings would only anger them and the dragons would attack. It was hopeless wishing that the dragons would be able to defeat the Vikings. The outcasts had been living the island for years and had defended themselves from the beasts. It wasn't about to change now. So he looked over at the others, who all frowned in defeat.

"Go on," Astrid sighed.

Hiccup looked back forward and saw that Alvin was getting impatient. The man's fists clenched and he started forward. "Begin teaching, Dragon Conquerer, or your friends will face the consequences."

Hiccup nodded and picked his way out to the beach to be in front of all the men. He glanced back once at his friends, who had a couple men standing behind them, swords ready should any of the teens try to escape. Tuffnut rubbed his stomach, wincing, while Snotlout asked to sit down before he ended up just collapsing. Hiccup watched his cousin fall and knew that the boy was suffering because of the cracked skull. Hiccup wanted to beg for medical attention for his kin, but knew that no man here could truly give it.

"All right," he said, turning back to all the men. He flinched under their gazes. This would be easier if he had a real dragon around to demonstrate. "When it comes to dragons, it's all about trust. You have to trust them to protect you and they have to trust you not to hurt them. It is also likewise. The dragon wants to know you'll be there for it while you want to know that it won't spray fire at your face."

The men exchanged looks and Hiccup knew, at that moment, that these men had about enough sense when it came to trust as Ruffnut and Tuffnut did about the word "peace."

"Odin, help me," he muttered.

Hiccup decided to try and waste time by getting the Viking men to try trust games, such as falling and letting the other person catch you. He did his best to relate this to dragons, but most of the outcasts scoffed at him. Alvin seemed irritated by everything and, after long hours of seeming to get nowhere, he approached Hiccup.

"Enough, Dragon Conquerer. Teach us to ride dragons now or your little blonde friend is going to lose her head," he breathed, grabbing Hiccup's shirt and pulling him close.

The rancid breath washed over Hiccup and he thought, for a moment, that he would faint. Alvin dropped him, though, and went back to standing amongst the other men. Hiccup recovered as fast as he could, sucking in fresh air before trying to figure out what else he could possibly teach without dragons around.

"Well, uh, one thing... you need to do... when approaching a dragon is... talk kind to him," he stumbled.

Many of the men laughed to themselves, giving each other glares and funny looks. Alvin growled under his breath and crossed his arms. The outcast leader simply didn't like the idea of speaking kind to the dragons. This wasn't what he signed up for.

Hiccup struggled to continue, "When the dragon is calm, you want to reach your hand out slowly. Don't try to be the one to touch the dragon, uh... Let the dragon come to you and touch your hand. This shows... uh, trust, between you and the dragon. If the dragon feels he can, er, trust you enough... he'll bow to you and you can... get on his back."

A moment of silence ensued. The sound of water lapping against the shore was the only audible thing for a while. Hiccup looked back at the others, who were sitting down by this point and watching with rather unamused expressions. When they noticed Hiccup staring at them, they all shrugged, unable to answer his curiosity as to why the Vikings were silent.

Then Alvin laughed. He roared with a laughter that nearly sent him tumbling to the ground. The other men burst into their own throaty laughs. Hiccup stood there, suddenly wishing for silence again.

Alvin pretended to wipe a tear from his eye, looking up and marching towards Hiccup. Hiccup took a step back, but felt his prosthetic foot sink deep into the sand, making it harder to move. He looked down at it, fear stretching across his eyes. He tugged at it, hoping to pull it back up before Alvin could pick him up and potentially rip it off his leg entirely.

The man stopped and the laughing died down. Hiccup turned and glanced up at him before looking right back down. Alvin was tomato red, eyes practically bulging with anger.

"That's it?" he demanded. "You speak nice to it and touch it and it'll let you ride it?"

His voice began to well with fury. That was when he reached out and grabbed Hiccup. He pulled the boy close and, luckily, Hiccup's leg came up out of the sand. Unfortunately, the horrible stench of Alvin's breath was rebathing him in a cloak of a horrible odor.

Suddenly, cries split the air. Forms began to appear in the clouds and then rain down. It wasn't water, though, but dragons. The creatures came sailing down, settling along the beach, amongst

outcasts, and up along the side of the mountain. Their eyes peered down at the men and teens. Alvin released Hiccup and drew back, spinning around to see them all. A wicked smile appeared on his face as he looked at them.

"You said you were kind to the dragons?" he asked.

Hiccup nodded, but was a bit dazed and looked confused as he did so.

"I think you're lying," Alvin hissed.

"Wha?" Hiccup started, but then felt something crash into the side of his head. He was went spinning to the left before he came down in the sand. He could taste the disgusting beads in his mouth, but he remained there, enjoying the idea of being able to bury his face in them.

"Hiccup!" Astrid and Fishlegs called, but were grabbed before they could move to help him.

Alvin turned to the nearest dragon, the Nightmare from yesterday. He marched forward, hand reaching for his sword. He stopped, though, and dropped his hand.

"The boy lies," he called to his men. "I'll show you."

He continued to stare at the Nightmare, his gaze never wavering. Hiccup had mentioned earlier that being able to look a dragon in the eyes showered respect. He believed that it meant the dragon needed to respect him. He got closer, hand reaching out. The Nightmare looked at him, growling, teeth baring. It took a step back. Alvin bared his teeth and continued moving forward.

"Come on, stupid creature. Lets do this stupid trust thing," he muttered, stopping a foot from the dragon.

The Nightmare stopped growling, seeing Alvin had halted his approach. It relaxed and cocked its head, seeming to contemplate whether or not to accept the man. It looked past him, seeing Hiccup who it recalled from yesterday. The boy had pushed himself up, was sitting in the sand, and looking over with wide eyes and a hand held to the side of his head.

Alvin decided the Nightmare was taking too long. He thrust his hand forward to try and touch it. The Nightmare cried out in alarm and snapped out, attempting to bite off Alvin's arm.

Alvin roared. "See! The boy lies!"

The men on the beach tensed and gathered their weapons, each then turning to the nearest dragon and advancing on them. Many of the dragons cried out and flew to the skies, escaping before they could be harmed. Others turned to fight, their eyes blazing to protect themselves.

Hiccup had a splitting headache. He felt like the world was spinning, but he stood up. He jogged as fast as he could manage towards Alvin, attempting to dodge men and dragons that moved in his way. He stumbled many times, his clothes were becoming sand coated and

gritty. He ignored it, though, and pressed forward.

Lightning then split the air and showered the world in a blinding light. Thunder drummed along after it, followed by the beginning of rain. The sand grew thicker, sucking at his metal foot and dragging him with each step. Hiccup spat sand out and wiped at the rain that tried to get in his eyes. His clothes clung to him, feeling absolutely filthy. He didn't stop, though.

"Alvin, wait! Stop!" he cried, bursting out to the scene where Alvin was facing the Nightmare.

He was too late, though. Alvin, having caught the Nightmare off guard, threw its head to the ground and it fell on its side. Before the creature could recoil or even think of dodging, Alvin's sword was out. The silver sparkled with a flash of lightning, then swung down. Blood splattered along the beach, sinking into the thick sand. Alvin snatched up the Nightmare's head and tossed it towards the sea, watching it land in the water. The spot where it sunk billowed crimson for a moment before the waves washed it away. Alvin was laughing wickedly, ignoring the blood that stained his clothes. He put a foot on the Nightmare's body and howled out through the night, competing with the thunder.

The remaining dragons fled, their wings beating furiously to get away. They vanished as fast as the could, disappearing either over the horizon or through the clouds. The men down on the beach chorused with shouts of joy.

Alvin looked over at Hiccup, his eyes locking onto his.

"Which one of your friends shall I kill for your treachery?" the man asked.

Hiccup's blood froze and the pounding headache got worse. He had sunken to his knees without realizing it and, at the thought of one of his friends being murdered, he found it difficult to breath. He was failing them. He was failing Berk. At this rate he would never see his home, his father, or Toothless again. His friends would never see their homes, their families, or their dragons either.

He looked back up, pleading with the man. "Give me another chance. Let me show you! Let me demonstrate! You didn't do it right. You didn't do it right..."

Alvin took his foot off the body of the Nightmare and come forward. His stern gaze was unyielding and Hiccup had to look away. The man reached down and forced Hiccup to stand.

"Fine then. One more chance. I won't be killing any of you tonight. But you will be punished," he said, his voice colder than any weather Hiccup had ever faced in his life.

Hiccup looked up at Alvin and nodded fiercely.

"I promise, if you give me this chance, you'll be riding dragons by tomorrow night."

It was a promise that, while he despised every word of it, he intended to keep.

\* \* \*

><p>I, uh... yeah...</p>

o.o

Review?

Love,

Deyoxis

#### 4. Training the Madman

After doing all right with the first two chapters about holding the characters... I absolutely butchered their personalities that previous chapter xD I'll give it to you guys straight... They might be a little odd for the next couple chapters. The situation they're in makes it difficult to stick to their actual personalities, haha. Plus, if you haven't figured it out, I'm not sure what to do with Fishlegs and Snotlout for some reason... They're just kind of there... Trying to work on incorporating them a bit more. As with Astrid not being her tough, go-getting self... well, with the way I'm playing Alvin, he'd probably kill her pretty quickly so I'm toning her down to keep her alive. As for Hiccup and the twins... well, I'm trying my hardest to stick to Hiccup's character and the twins are just fun, haha.

I just found some of the episodes online. I've really only seen bits and pieces and the end of the Alvin and the Outcasts episode so I feel like actually catching up on what is going on in the actual show might help xD Though, I'm still not following it in this story exactly, as said in the first chapter.

\*\*Just me:\*\* Thirteen babies? Poor Meatlug... o.o As for the squirrels, I have never fed them. They terrify me too much. They're mean squirrels. Grr. But thanks for all the comments! You sure had a bunch, which is good... I hope, haha.

\*\*Chapter Four: Training the Madman\*\*

Before the sun was even up, Stoick had men out on boats, scouring the seas to find the island that Alvin and the other outcasts occupied. Dragons took to the air, leaving Toothless behind. The Night Fury sat outside the Great Hall along the giant wooden boardwalk that overlooked the harbor and out to sea. He was still, his eyes hardly even blinking as he kept his pupils trained on the horizon, waiting for a returning ship to bring back Hiccup and the others. Every once and a while, he'd look up, wondering if Stormfly or Hookfang or even Meatlug would be returning with news of having found them.

Nothing.

The village was extra quiet today, most of the men and women gone. The ones that remained watched after the lazy sheep or took care of household chores, their gazes always flicking out to the harbor whenever they got a chance, wondering for news.

The village was concerned for Hiccup and the other teens, but they were also concerned of what Alvin had planned. Kidnapping seemed beneath the man who everyone had believed would want revenge against Stoick and the tribe. If that had been the case, wouldn't he have just captured Hiccup, being the chief's son? No one could quite determine what the plan was, and that was what made the ordeal all the more frightening.

As the day drew past noon, Toothless began to get restless. He began to pace, his weight making the wooden boards beneath him creak and his claws scraping splinters out. Thunder rumbled in the distance and Toothless paused, looking out in the direction of dark clouds. They were just barely visible on the horizon, but the distant flashing of lightning and soft roar that followed it were clear. Toothless narrowed his eyes, wondering how many ships had gone out in the direction of the storm. Probably few. It was risky. Toothless couldn't help but feel that was where Hiccup and the others would be found.

He whined, tail lashing angrily. He turned and made his way down towards the village. He moved through it, stomping heavily. He hated being stranded, unable to assist everyone on the quest. He needed to be out there. Without Hiccup, though, he couldn't fly anywhere. And Hiccup missing just so happened to be the problem.

"Toothless," Gobber called, running over as well as he could on his peg leg. "Toothless, there you are. The sun will be setting soon, have you eaten?"

Toothless was caught between bewilderment and confusion at Gobber's question. No, he hadn't eaten, but food seemed least important right now. He wasn't sure how the man could be concerned about food at a time like this. He never took Gobber for being like, that, either. The man usually always seemed to keep up with what was going on about not.

Gobber chuckled, seeing the look on Toothless' face. "If you want to go flying, then you're going to need to eat so you don't faint from hunger."

Flying? What was Gobber talking about. Toothless had just been ranting to himself about how he couldn't fly right and now Gobber was going about, acting like Toothless didn't have a broken tail that prevented him from taking to the skies by himself.

"Come along, I'll show you," Gobber instructed, turning and hobbling off.

Toothless didn't exactly have anything better to do than be useless so it was worth following the man. Another rumble of thunder passed through the air. Toothless glanced up and saw that the dark clouds on the horizon were advancing, though slowly. They loomed threateningly, billowing like thick, black smoke. He looked back down and saw that Gobber was getting away from him so he jumped forward, easily catching up. The blacksmith was leading him to his workshop.

"Wait right there, I'll be right back," Gobber instructed, ducking into his shop. Toothless heard rummaging and then the crashing of tools and other random objects hitting the ground. Gobber cursed and

Toothless had to chuckle lightly to himself despite the situation. He waited and his head cocked as Gobber reappeared.

The man was holding a strange contraption. It looked like Toothless' fake tail. He leaned forward, sniffing. Gobber proceeded to open it, revealing that it was, in fact, a fake tail. It looked eerily familiar to Toothless and he took a step back, trying to recall where he had seen the thing before.

Gobber chuckled and grabbed a metal rod, moving it in and out. The tail flap did the same thing and Toothless suddenly recalled where it was from. Snoggletog. Hiccup had given it to him so that he could fly by himself, without the boy riding on top. Toothless had used it to get Hiccup's helmet back for him, but then destroyed it. Toothless didn't want the ability to fly alone (except for right now...), he wanted Hiccup along. He liked depending on the boy. His best friend. He growled lightly at it, wondering how Gobber had found it.

"I built it myself," Gobber explained. "I figured you might have wanted to go fly and help the others. So I snooped through Hiccup's notes a bit and found the design for this tail. You're welcome to rid yourself of it later, but I thought you'd might like it until we get Hiccup back safely."

Toothless, though he had first been hesitant about rewearing the strange contraption, couldn't pass it up now. It was his opportunity to help Hiccup. He turned, allowing Gobber access to removing the saddle and other prosthetic tail. The man quickly took them off. Toothless had grown used to having the saddle on throughout the day, it was practically a part of him. He slept with it off at night, but had grown to enjoy its presence. As it was taken, his felt like a piece of himself was coming off. It felt extremely weird when Gobber removed his tail, but then strapped on the new one.

Toothless lifted his whole tail and tested it out, spreading his tail flap out, moving it up and down. The other side mimicked it exactly and Gobber nodded in satisfaction. Even Toothless smiled at it, glad for the chance to get out there and help. He turned to Gobber and nudged him gratefully. The man laughed before swatting teasingly at him, pointing to a barrel of fish and then telling him to get going before the storm arrived full fledged.

What Gobber didn't know was that Toothless was going to head straight into that storm.

\* \* \*

><p>Alvin had been serious when he had told Hiccup that they would be punished. Back in the dungeon, water dripping along the walls as the outside world exploded in the storm, the outcast leader had hooked them all back up in their chains. He paced along, figuring out each method of torture he wanted to use on each child.</p>

Hiccup and the others did their bests to stand up straight and tall. None of them backed down, except Fishlegs inwardly trembled, the fear obvious in his eyes. Astrid was feeling better, her blue eyes glaring up at the man fiercely and a scowl on her face, daring him to come at her. Ruffnut and Tuffnut had taunts sitting on the tips of their tongues. Snotlout, who was growing sick because of his head, was trying his best to act normal, though he was certain he would throw

up any second now.

"You've been pacing for five minutes, man. You going to do anything or you too chicken?" Hiccup's cousin finally snorted, unable to contain himself. He was searching for his former attitude, trying to act casual. He couldn't let the men know just how bad his head wound actually was.

Alvin wheeled around to slam a fist into Snotlout's all ready broken head. Astrid was faster in that situation. As soon as Snotlout had started talking, she knew something was going to come, so she launched herself at the boy, shoving him to the side where they both tumbled to the ground, only stopped once they reached the length of their chains. Astrid feared she had knocked Snotlout's head worse, but she looked at him from where she was lying upon him, he was just grinning a stupid grin and obviously not in anymore pain than he had been before.

"I knew you'd come on me, Astrid," Snotlout chuckled. "Only a matter of time."

Alvin, after swinging at air, bulged with anger, his eyes practically turning red. Before anyone had time to think, he had Grabbed Astrid by one of her back legs and dangled her in the air. She struggled to maintain her composure but also her skirt at the same time. Looking Alvin in the face, she spat on him. He cried out in surprise and flung her, her body smacking against the wall before rolling to the floor.

Hiccup ran up alongside her body and touched her gingerly.  
"Astrid!"

She moaned and leaned up on her elbows. She shook Hiccup off when he tried to help her stand and pushed to her feet by herself. She turned to Alvin, eyes narrowed and hiding the fact that her bruised face was heating up again with a fresh round of pain. She didn't even seem concerned that the man was obviously pissed off to the point that he was probably contemplating the many ways to achieve her death in the next ten seconds.

"So, on to your punishments," Alvin scowled, his gaze traveling over each kid. "The girls here will spend the night in the Dark Pit, fat boy here will get to massage my feet, the other twin and Snotface can be my targets for my sword practice, and the Dragon Conquerer here can test out our water."

"Dark Pit?" Ruffnut questioned.

"Sword practice?" Tuffnut echoed.

"Massage your feet?" Fishlegs trembled.

Alvin nodded, pulling a boot off and stretching out his foot, wiggling his toes. A black substance clung to his foot, looking a lot like the gruel Alvin had tried to feed them that morning. A stench began to fill the cave that nearly made the poor teens faint. "I think they're a little ripe. They could use a good massage."

Fishlegs about fainted, but Alvin put his foot back into his shoe and

turned. "I'll be right back. Gotta' get some more of my men to help me and I'll give you teens some actual food and water so you don't die on me."

When Alvin returned, he had two other men with him. They brought meat with them as well as water, which Hiccup and the others devoured quickly. It wasn't until after they were done that they wished they had slowed down to avoid the punishments longer.

Alvin ordered his accomplices to take Astrid and Ruffnut away to the Dark Pit. The men vanished with the girls, despite the fact that Astrid elbowed her captor in the stomach, stomped on his toes, and all around made the trip all too difficult. While they did that, Alvin got comfortable in front of Fishlegs, pulling out a foot and waving it in the poor boy's face.

Fishlegs was gagging and choking the whole time. Luckily for him, he only had to do it until the men returned. Unfortunately, they took their time to return and, as soon as they did, Fishlegs passed out into a fitful sleep. Snotlout, Tuffnut, and Hiccup had all moved as far away as they possibly could have during the whole session, pitying Fishlegs but also themselves. While massaging Alvin's bunions was clearly a horrendous ordeal, none of them were quite ready for whatever it was that was in store for them.

Unchaining Snotlout and Tuffnut, Alvin's two helpers each grabbed one of the teens and moved them to the center of the room. Alvin reached to his belt and unhooked his sword, holding it up, still sheathed. He smiled at the two boys, rotten teeth looking only darker in the dim lighting of the room. He swung the sword around a bit, the sheath starting to slide off. He moved it back up and looked over at the boys. "Don't run, it'll only make me hit harder."

"Wait, what?" Tuffnut asked and, at that moment, Alvin ran towards him, drew back his arm, and swung at the boy's leg.

Tuffnut fell back to the ground and on his butt. He grunted in surprise but quickly rolled over and back to his feet. He turned to see Alvin had continued to swing and did the same thing to Snotlout. The larger boy copied Tuffnut's move and was soon back on his feet, as well. Both ignored the flare of pain in the calf that Alvin had hit. They readied themselves for his next move.

Alvin swiped out towards Tuffnut's stomach. That area still being Tuffnut's most bruised section made it so that he was on guard to dodge anything aimed at his midsection. He jumped back, sucking his abdomen in and curving his body. Alvin growled with anger as he missed. Tuffnut grinned and even let out a small laugh of triumph. When he looked back at Alvin, his face fell. "Uh oh!"

Alvin flung his sword so hard towards Tuffnut's head that the sheath went flying, soaring through the air and clattering at Hiccup's feet. Hiccup looked from it to Tuffnut, worried he would see his friend's head rolling across the floor. The sound of steel hitting metal was heard, though, and it was discovered that Tuffnut had ducked, only for the sword to collide with his helmet. It knocked it from his head and the thing rolled across the ground, curving and slowly coming to a rest beside the sheath. Hiccup opened his mouth slightly, looking down at the two objects.

"Oh, boy," he muttered, bending down and picking up the helmet. He tossed it back to Tuffnut, who caught it and jammed it back down on his head hurriedly.

Alvin strode over and picked up the sheath, placing it back over his sword. "Wouldn't want to swing my sword around without this right now. I like keeping my dungeon clean."

Hiccup, for the first time since first being captured, felt the same bravery against Alvin that he had felt when he gave himself in to the man all those weeks ago. Back then, he had been brave because he knew he would soon have Toothless with him and he'd be able to fight back. Now he felt it because, looking at Alvin the Treacherous, he just saw a man who felt the need to bully people who didn't have the abilities to defend themselves. Or at least not defend themselves well. The confidence must have entered in his gaze and body expression because Alvin snorted at him, laughing darkly.

"Don't act so tough, Dragon Conquerer. Just wait until it's your turn for your punishment," he reminded, then turned and hit Snotlout in the stomach before kicking the boy over.

Snotlout moaned, but rolled along the ground to avoid a powerful downswing from Alvin. The sheath hitting the cave floor made a startling noise, but didn't affect the wielder as he straightened right back up and charged for the boys again. By the time he was done, Tuffnut was bruised up and down his back. Snotlout's head was a blazing fire that couldn't be cooled even by the chill of the cave, and his legs shook from having run around so much to dodge Alvin's attacks.

Alvin's men chained them back up while Alvin tied his sword back to his belt, eyes penetrating over to Hiccup. He waited, watching as one man moved to release Hiccup from his bonds.

"I feel like a sandwich. My bruises are the buns," Tuffnut growled.

Snotlout was sitting down, leaning against the back wall. He glared up at Tuffnut. "You would make a disgusting sandwich."

"Fine with me. I don't want to be anyone's meal."

Hiccup watched his friends and even smiled lightly. It was good to see them conversing like they hadn't just taken a beaten by one of their greatest, if not their greatest, enemies. He felt a sudden grip on his left arm but tried to pull himself away. He looked up at Alvin with his mouth set in a hard line. "I can walk without you dragging me along. Just lead the way."

Alvin smirked before turning and heading out of the cave. Hiccup trailed, with the two men following behind him, cutting off any escape routes he might take. Hiccup wasn't even planning on trying to escape. He couldn't see what running away from men twenty times his size would accomplish when he was on a island... A certain form of landscape that just so happened to be surrounded by water and unless Hiccup planned on swimming back to Berk, he sure as heck didn't have the ability to steer a boat by himself.

Alvin turned right suddenly, into another long passageway. Hiccup

followed, his steps slow as he looked around him. Water was pouring in from the roof in larger quantities here. He struggled to figure out how the mountain could possibly be leaking, but determined that perhaps the mountain wasn't made of much compacted material. Surely that meant that the whole structure was weak and could fall in on itself at any moment. He felt a couple drops splatter on his head and grumbled warily.

They entered a room. This one, much like the dungeon, was lighted by torches, as it clearly located within the depths of the mountain. The room wasn't as large as the dungeon and was actually taken up by a large pool. The water looked dark and murky. It reflected the firelight eerily. The walls wavered, the watery reflection dancing like snakes, looking both deadly and captivating at the same time.

"In you go, boy," Alvin ordered.

The voice bounced around off the walls and Hiccup felt like multiple men were telling him to jump in the water and not just one. He approached the edge and looked down. The water was still, like a thin sheet of ice. A water droplet was released from the ceiling above and hit the surface, causing a fan or ripples to reach out, expanding out until they hit the edge and vanished. Then the water returned to normal until the cycle repeated.

Then Hiccup was falling in. Alvin, having grown impatient, shoved him from behind. Hiccup felt himself overwhelmed and then his body practically froze. The water was colder than the ocean! It was also deep and, though Hiccup sunk down a couple feet, he still couldn't feel the bottom. It terrified him because it felt like an endless void of black water. Despite the fact that his blood felt like it was freezing in his veins, Hiccup pulled at the water with his hands and kicked. His one good foot was effective, but the prosthetic was useless. It provided no help to him and Hiccup could even feel the metal wanting to sink down.

Something grabbed his hair and Hiccup felt himself being yanked up, his neck protesting violently. He cried out with pain as his head breached the surface. He sputtered, spitting and gulping down the air, which suddenly seemed very warm compared to the substance he was in. He could hardly feel his body, but ordered it to keep moving, trying to warm himself up through thrashing.

Then he was pushed back under. Alvin's hand was gripping his hair tightly, nearly pulling it out. Hiccup kicked and pushed, but Alvin wouldn't let him come back up to breath. Just as Hiccup's lungs began to pound with a fierce desperation, Alvin pulled him back up again.

Hiccup couldn't see, for he had kept his eyes closed. The water was too cold, he felt like his eyeballs would turn to ice if he opened his lids. As he choked down air, water dripping down his face, he focused on just trying to stay alive, refusing to say anything to Alvin. He would not beg for the man's mercy. Besides, Alvin surely wouldn't kill him, would he?

Shoved back under, Hiccup had attempted to take in the biggest breath he could manage. It only half worked. The other half included an inhaling of water. Hiccup coughed underwater, gagging and needing to

breath. His throat felt scratched up, burning like a wildfire. He continued his desperate flailing, but only wore his energy down faster. He couldn't feel his limbs, he couldn't breath, and his entire being was screaming for help. When Alvin didn't pull him up after a moment, Hiccup gave into darkness.

\* \* \*

><p>When Hiccup awoke, it was the next day and he felt awful. He was back in the dungeon. He could feel the chain around his wrist. He coughed, water spewing out of his throat as his eyes fluttered open. Despite the fact that his limbs felt weak, he recognized that he could feel them. They were even somewhat warm.</p>

"Hiccup, you're awake!" a voice called to him.

Hiccup turned his head, having been looking at the ceiling of the cave. Fishlegs was sitting there, holding a torch.

"Fishlegs?" Hiccup gagged.

He managed to push himself into a sitting position, his body aching in protest, but he ignored it. Blinking, he looked to his other side and saw Snotlout and Tuffnut, each holding a torch of their own and seeming somewhat pleased with themselves.

"What happened?" Hiccup muttered, looking back to Fishlegs.

"Uh, we saved your life," Tuffnut answered.

Snotlout laughed. "Yeah, we just saved the Hero of Berk. I think this earns us some kind of medal or something."

"I hear that," Tuffnut agreed.

Hiccup rolled his eyes, still looking at Fishlegs.

"Well, Alvin brought you back and you were all cold and wet. So Tuffnut, Snotlout, and I managed to grab some of the torches from the wall and we've been waving them over you, trying to dry you," the boy explained, shrugging lightly. "Did it work?"

Hiccup smiled in disbelief. "You guys did that all night?"

"Yep. Think it'll impress Astrid?"

Hiccup ignored the second part of Snotlout's declaration and shook his head. "I can't believe you guys did that. Thanks."

"Anytime," Fishlegs smiled nervously.

The sound of footsteps approaching signaled the arrival of Alvin and his men. Hiccup turned to look at them as they entered while Fishlegs, Snotlout, and Tuffnut tossed their torches into a puddle, extinguishing them and sending the dungeon into an even dimmer lighting.

"All right, Dragon Conquerer. Time for you to keep your promise."

The boys were released and led back up to the beach, though Hiccup, Snotlout, and Tuffnut all seemed to struggle with every step. As they entered into the outside world, Hiccup discovered that it was still raining. Hard. Thunder and lightning were no where to be seen or heard for the moment. The dark clouds above hid the light of the sun and Hiccup wondered if it was even daytime.

"Now, Dragon Conquerer. Show us how to ride dragons," Alvin laughed.

Hiccup was all ready weak because of the torture last night. At Alvin's words, though, he shook not just from weakness but from a sudden realization. Would any dragons even return to the island? He couldn't imagine they would. It was also pouring. What dragon would be about, flying around in a rainstorm? No sensible one, that was for certain. He looked up to the sky with dread. If Alvin wasn't flying on a dragon by tonight, Hiccup had broken his promise.

They were all dead.

And just because Alvin couldn't ride the dragons, that didn't mean Berk was safe from the madman.

He turned and glanced behind him, seeing Alvin still laughing. Tuffnut, Snotlout, and Fishlegs were all looking at the sky, trying to locate a dragon for Hiccup to train. Eventually, Snotlout gave up and kicked at the sand, sending clumps of it in the air before they came smashing down on the ground.

Many more outcasts were arriving, ready to watch Hiccup accomplish nothing. Two of them came dragging Ruffnut and Astrid out. Neither looked too shaken or beat up, just tired. Their eyes were red and rimmed with dark circles, though Astrid only had one dark circle, the other eye still covered by the purple flesh of her bruise. She and Ruffnut were shoved over to the others, where they joined them in a line and looked out at Hiccup with hopeless gazes.

Hiccup couldn't look at them. He turned away and gazed out at the raging sea, the water spraying this way and that as waves fought against each other, swirling and diving. Rain splattered down, supersaturating the soaked beach and reminding Hiccup of last night, being held under the water and unable to breath. The water that hit him now wasn't quite as terrifying, though, as it wasn't near as cold nor overwhelming. He sighed into the air, his breath visible and curling around his face.

A roar split the air. At first, Hiccup thought it was thunder, but when he looked up, he realized why. A Thunderdrum was skimming along the surface of the water, beating its wings to stay just above the splattering waves. It was flying toward the island and Hiccup looked back, figuring it was probably looking to seek shelter in one of the caves of the mountain. As the dragon neared, however, it noticed the gathering of people and halted its approach. It made to turn around and seek shelter elsewhere.

"No, no! Please!" Hiccup called into the air.

He ran out down the beach, struggling to get through the sand. Reaching the edge of the ocean, he kept going, splashing out into the shallow waters. He waved his arms and continued to call to the

creature. "Come on! It's okay. You'll be safe here. We'll help you!"

The Thunderdrum narrowed its eyes, seeming to think. Finally, it started drifting back forward and Hiccup felt relief washing over him. A smile graced his features despite the fact that he knew he was only using the dragon. As soon as he thought about this, he winced, but knew what needed to be done. The Thunderdrum came to a landing on the beach, looking over at the outcasts with a suspicious glare and claws digging into the sand.

Hiccup came back up onto land and smiled at the creature, soothing words falling from his mouth in a rush. He motioned Alvin to come over and the man made his way up.

"Okay, watch," he said softly, turning back to the Thunderdrum.

He continued to speak kindly and slowly began to approach. The Thunderdrum sniffed the air, uncertain. He didn't growl or snap at Hiccup, though. The boy moved forward some more, slowly reaching a hand out. The dragon, not currently screaming its head off, was flat and lower than even Toothless. It looked up at Hiccup with wide eyes. Hiccup stopped a foot or so away and smiled.

"It's okay, buddy. We can be friends."

The Thunderdrum stepped forward, sinking under Hiccup's hand. Then it raised its head, pressing its noise into his palm. Hiccup smiled, loving the feeling of knowing the creature trusted him. It crumbled his heart as he realized he was betraying the trust all ready. He looked back at Alvin and motioned him to come closer.

The man approached. The Thunderdrum stiffened, but relaxed when it saw Hiccup reach out and take Alvin's arm. Hiccup held Alvin's hand out for him. He felt Alvin tense and the outcast started to growl under his breath. Hiccup hushed him and told him to say hello.

Alvin glared at him, having no interest in greeting the dragon. Hiccup narrowed his eyes, though, so Alvin grunted. "Hello, dragon."

The Thunderdrum dipped its head slightly, then raised it to accomplish the process of pressing his nose into the palm of Alvin's hand. The Viking seemed about to pull away, his free hand starting to inch towards his sword, but once he realized the dragon didn't plan on attacking, he stopped. The rain pounded down around them and Alvin glanced up towards the top of the mountain, to the ledge where the main room was. He knew that room would be big enough for the Thunderdrum and, if the creature flew him up there, it would prove that Hiccup had kept his promise.

Hiccup watched as Alvin looked at the dragon. It seemed to think, then took its head away and bowed.

"You can ride him now," Hiccup reported.

He examined the Thunderdrum. It was a blood red color, perfect for Alvin. Its scales seemed darker under the watery spray of the storm. Alvin slipped on top of it and ordered it to rise. The Thunderdrum beat its wings and began to rise into the air. Alvin began to howl

with a glorious triumph, grinning wickedly. He reached over and snatched the back of Hiccup's shirt, pulling him onto the back of the Thunderdrum.

"I have no more use for you, Dragon Conquerer," Alvin hissed. "Out to sea, creature! I request one thing of you before we go to the safety of a cave."

The Thunderdrum turned and started off over the ocean. Hiccup snatched the back of Alvin's shirt to keep from getting thrown off. He looked back and saw Astrid running out after them, stopping once the sea rose to her knees. She cried out his name and Hiccup felt his heart tug with sadness. He knew from Alvin's words that he wouldn't be coming back to that island. He wouldn't be going back to Berk, either.

He watched the island shrink. Soon, it vanished through the veil of the storm, unable to be seen through the rain. He looked back forward, wondering what Alvin wanted to do to him.

"Stop, dragon," Alvin commanded and Thunderdrum obeyed, hovering out over the ocean. Alvin turned to Hiccup, making sure not to go sliding off of the Thunderdrum's back. "This is where we part ways, Dragon Conquerer. Don't worry, you kept your promise so your friends will live. For now."

Then the man grabbed Hiccup's shirt, holding it tight between clenched fingers.

"What are you doing?" Hiccup gasped, then felt himself flung.

He was falling. Falling to the middle of the ocean. He saw Alvin turn the Thunderdrum away to go back to the outcasts' island. Then Hiccup hit the water.

\* \* \*

><p>Ah, now things will start to get more exciting!</p>

Reviews are lovely, and inspire me to keep writing!

Love,

Deyoxis

## 5. Rescue

Stoick has a Thunderdrum... \*watches latest episode\* Ohhhhh... Whoopps...

This is why I'm going to start keeping up with the show  
xD

WednesdaysateightWednesdaysa teight.

Ah, well, that actually doesn't harm my plot so no worries. I can adjust to this... And it might make for an epic battle later on, haha  
xD

**\*\*Transparent Existence:\*\*** That was such an exceedingly kind review... I thank you so much for those generous words! And don't be afraid to write your own fic. Half the time I don't feel like my writing could hold a candle to some other authors on here, but I always go through with them anyways, because - even should they not be as awesome as other stories - it is a great learning experience for me as a writer. You'll always have at least one faithful reader and I'd be more than happy to read it should you write it, as well (:

To all others who have faved/watched/reviewed this story... much love goes out to you! I expected like, at most, five people to maybe read this so it's wonderful to be going beyond my expectations!

#### **\*\*Chapter Five: Rescue\*\***

The air under Toothless' wings felt amazing. Well, as amazing as it could feel when that air that was blowing around one was like turbulence. The dragon pounded his muscles on, pressing through the rain that dotted his vision. The storm was raging around him, lightning streaking across the sky followed by the grumbling of thunder. Toothless beat his wings harder, trying to maintain control. He had considered flying up above the storm, but he wouldn't be able to see anything beneath the swirling clouds and it was all ready hard enough to hear through the screaming of the storm. If he was above it, he feared he might never hear what he wanted. The voice of his best friend.

A flash of hot, white light lit up his world and Toothless veered, a cry emitting from his throat as he dodged the wild blast. He kept his eyes shut for a moment before reopening them. Rainwater dripped down the scales of his forehead, obscuring his vision and shielding his eyes. He tossed his head about to free himself from their watery grip, but they were only replaced by more. He snarled in frustration and knew he needed to find a place to settle down until the storm slowed up.

Beating his wings forward, he eventually saw a small splotch of land in the distance. He pressed onward until it grew to a considerable size. There was no cover from the storm, being just a big slab of rock. Toothless recognized instantly the body of a Thunderdrum resting on top. He alighted down next to the other dragon, thinking it wouldn't be too difficult to share the slab. The Thunderdrum, however, wasn't too pleased.

It turned, snarling at him and crying out wicked threats for Toothless to leave. Toothless narrowed his eyes, their light green depths piercing through the air to stare down the other creature. He opened his mouth and let his teeth reveal themselves from under his gums. He wasn't going to be frightened by the selfish beast.

He tried to reason with it, letting the Thunderdrum know that it would only be until the storm clear. Still, his words did not soothe the other dragon's fury and the next thing Toothless knew, the Thunderdrum's mouth was gaping open to let out that horrendous noise his species were known for. Toothless, surprise that the other creature was actually about to attack him, rolled to the side and let himself drop from the slab. The Thunderdrum's roar echoed through empty air above where Toothless had just been. He was plummeting for

a moment before spreading his wings and catching himself. He soared along the top of the water, making to look like he was going to leave.

He snapped his body up suddenly and climbed into the sky. Lightning let out a burst nearby, setting Toothless' wet, black scales aglow with a shimmering light. Before he reached the clouds, he turned, letting himself drop back and tucking in his wings. He dive bombed towards the Thunderdrum, which looked up at the Night Fury with anger intense in its gaze. It sucked in a breath, about to unleash another round when Toothless felt his fire build and he unleashed it right at the Thunderdrum.

The crimson scaled dragon was too slow to dodge and the fire hit the inside of his mouth, knocking him backwards. The creature skidded along the edge of the slab, grabbing at any nook and cranny it could with its claws. As his back legs toppled over the edge, it managed to hook on to something and lay there, dangling. It was growling curses and began to flap its wings to help pull itself back up onto the rock.

Toothless set himself back down on the small slab of land. He warned the dragon that if it tried to attack him again, he would make sure his next shot went all the way down the beast's throat and into its belly. The Thunderdrum pulled itself to its feet and huffed, trying to regain its composure. It was still tense, all muscles stiff and ready to fight. It searched Toothless over, trying to seek a weak point that it could exploit. Toothless couldn't believe the dragon had this big of an issue with him being here.

Finally, the Thunderdrum stomped in defeat and wheeled around. It opened its wings and took to the skies. It would find another place to stay, one with company that was much more friendly.

Toothless bared his teeth at the creature's back as it left. Company? Wasn't the fact that it didn't want company the whole reason it attacked Toothless in the first place? He snorted, unable to believe the idiocy of some fellow dragons. Even the twin friends of Hiccup appeared to have more brains than that dragon did.

At the thought of Hiccup, Toothless felt a swell of loss coarse through his body. He whined softly into the air and was responded with the crackling of thunder. The storm blazed through, mighty and crushing like the Red Death. It sent sprays of water shooting at the slab and the ocean around it collided and tore at its structure. Toothless knew he wouldn't be getting any sleep at the moment, his worry too great and the thunder too loud. He settled down along the edge, looking down to watch the swirling of the ocean, its dark water pitching back and forth like Toothless flying without his prosthetic.

It continued for hours until around morning with Toothless remaining practically frozen to the spot. The Night Fury was beat, his whole body protesting movement as he finally stirred. He had been lying still for so long that he wondered if his body would even function. He tested out his legs and moved his wings up and down. He was good, but a dull ache reminded him that he had just flown through a storm last night, fought a Thunderdrum, and "slept" on a cold, hard slab.

It was still raining, but no thunder or lightning could be heard any more. While the rain still came down in sheets, the wind had calmed and Toothless knew he could take to the skies again. He pushed off the rock and skimmed along the air, continuing in the direction he had started last night. He seemed to cross a great expanse of ocean before he heard something. A voice. The beating of wings. Then another voice. A familiar voice. Hiccup's voice.

Toothless felt a surge of confidence and achievement rush through his body. He turned in the direction of the sound of his best friend, flying faster than he ever felt he could manage. The voices had been distant, beyond the horizon, but Toothless' excellent hearing had caught them. He had found who he was looking for!

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup was beginning to dislike water. Between the torturous pool from last night, the drumming of the rain on his body every time he was outside, and now the beating of the ocean, he was pretty sure it would be the reason he died. Especially now, since he was drowning.</p>

He beat against the water to stay at the surface. His arms worked overtime and his right leg kicked with a stronger force than he knew he had. His body was sore, though, and he found that he didn't have near the stamina to keep this going for long enough. He tried to look around, but a wave rolled through the ocean and Hiccup felt his body spinning as he was thrust under. He groped with his hands, trying to seek out the surface where air desperately called to him. The ocean only pushed against him harder, however, and Hiccup felt his lungs burning in much the same fashion as last night.

When he finally came back up, he sought out much needed oxygen. He let it fill his body before he was forced back under. He slowed his thrashing, realizing that he had no way to beat the tameless sea. He was going to drown here. He might as well accept it. There was nothing and no one out there to save him now. It was hopeless.

Hiccup's head breached the surface once more and he took in a breath before letting himself sink. His body was frigid. Every ounce of him felt like it was slowly turning to ice, cold from the air, cold from the ocean, and cold from the life that was slowly slipping out of his reach. He was a failure. Now, because of him, Berk would be destroyed by Alvin and the others. Astrid would be dead. Snotlout would be dead. Ruffnut would be dead. Tuffnut would be dead. Fishlegs would be dead. His father would be dead. Gobber, Spitelout, Phlegma, Bucket, Mulch...

All because Hiccup had failed so miserably.

He squeezed his eyes shut. The last thing he would ever see would be the chilly void of the ocean. He hadn't even gotten to see his father one last time. Though now he didn't want to. He couldn't imagine the look of sheer disappointment that would grace Stoick's features once he realized what his own son had done. Helped their greatest enemy to save his friends. He doomed his whole village for people that were just going to be killed by Alvin anyways.

Hiccup felt something wind around his arms on both sides. They felt

almost like hands, but were rougher. He didn't want to open his eyes and find out. The air in his lungs finally released and he was about to slip away into a forever slumber when he recognized that the hands... or whatever they were... were pulling him up towards the surface. The thing that gripped him was obviously powerful, using strong legs or something to raise them up at an alarming speed.

It couldn't be a person... It had to be a dragon.

Thy shot out of the water and into the air. Hiccup was greeted by a cold hug of atmosphere and his eyes shot open, wondering what dragon would have saved him. His gaze was blurry, but filled with darkness. He feared for a small moment that he had gone blind, but that tendril of worry vanished as he looked up to the dragon's head.

"Toothless!" he sputtered, the word coming out with a mixture of pure excitement and joy along with a strain of wariness and disbelief.

The dragon crooned, pulling Hiccup tight against his body to shield him from the rain. Hiccup had never felt such happiness before than seeing his best friend now. How had Toothless found him? How was he flying? Hiccup didn't even find the strength to care at that moment. Instead, he just laughed, finding everything, no matter how bad, was bearable with Toothless beside him. He pressed his cheek against Toothless' chest. The dragons scales were slick with rainwater, but warm from the internal fire. Hiccup felt like he could stop shivering.

It seemed like no time at all before Toothless reached the edge of the storm. Sunlight flooded the world, splashing off the surface of the sea and causing Toothless's wet body to flicker like a black fire. The dragon found the first rock formation he could and landed, setting Hiccup down gently on top. Hiccup was content to lay there for a moment, soaking in the sun that he had missed over the past two days. Although the air wasn't completely warm, never before had the sun's rays felt so inviting and comforting and Hiccup didn't want to waste any of it.

Toothless let out a soft coo and nudged his best friend, wondering if he was okay. The dragon snorted in his face and Hiccup laughed, rolling away from him but careful not to tumble over the edge. Hiccup sat up, looking at his friend with a smile that looked like it would hurt. Toothless stepped forward and Hiccup reached out, wrapping his arms around his friend's head and holding him close.

"I can't believe you found me, bud. I missed you so much!"

The dragon purred softly in agreement. He pulled back when Hiccup let go and looked the boy over. Hiccup's clothing obviously hid the bruises, but the boy's face seemed paler with eyes that were rimmed red from lack of sleep and torment. He whined softly, sniffing Hiccup warily as if to ask what had happened.

Hiccup sighed and shook his head. "It doesn't matter, bud. What matters is that Astrid and the others are still with Alvin and we gotta' rescue them. He'll kill them if we don't get there in time. He just tried to kill me."

At this, Toothless' whole body seemed to go into attack mode. The

dragon's teeth came out, glinting in the sunlight and bright against his dark body. His claws scratched the surface of the rock and his tail lashed. The dragon turned his gaze to look back into the storm they had flown out of. His wings stretched, signaling he was ready. The growls and rumbles that sought their way out of his throat showed Hiccup that his friend meant to show Alvin no mercy for anything and everything he had done and was going to do.

"Toothless, wait," Hiccup begged, pushing himself to his feet. He stumbled as he approached the Night Fury, his body running on energy he didn't have. "We need to wait until the storm is over. We might also need help. Alvin knows... Alvin has..."

He trailed off, unable to bring himself to admit the crime he had committed. He tore himself away, looking off into another distance, feeling ashamed. He couldn't even bring himself to tell his best friend what he had done. He wondered how he was going to break the news to his father. His green eyes squeezed shut for a moment and he searched for the words he wanted to say. He felt Toothless' muzzle press into his back comfortingly and he released the breath he had been holding with a flood of agony.

"Toothless, I taught Alvin how to train dragons," he whispered. "He was going to kill the others if I didn't. Now they're going to die anyways and I may have just doomed Berk."

He expected Toothless to smack him or show some sort of frustration for what he had done. Instead, the dragon crooned softly, sounding sullen. The Night Fury walked around to stand in front of Hiccup, who opened his eyes to look at his friend. The two just stared at each other for a moment. Then Hiccup realized that Toothless was trying to tell him that it didn't matter. He would be here for him anyways. They'd solve this together. Hiccup reached out and pressed a hand to Toothless' nose. The dragon purred lightly before pulling away, snorting and motioning with his head towards the storm.

"Wait, hold on. I need to think of a plan. We can't just storm the island. Astrid and the others are probably locked back up in the dungeon right now. We won't be able to get to them without being seen. I also don't know how we can get them all off the island," Hiccup mused much to Toothless' annoyance.

The dragon sat back on his haunches, watching Hiccup pace up and down the rock. The boy glanced at the Night Fury's tail and noticed the prosthetic. He was about to ask, but decided not to worry about it now and continued on with his pacing. The clinking of his own prosthetic on the surface sounded like a rhythm and, after some time, it began to get irritating to both human and dragon. Hiccup forced himself to stop and crashed onto his bottom, grunting in frustration. "I don't know what to do! We need help!"

Toothless nodded. He glanced back in the direction of Berk, roaring softly before bounding to the edge of the rock and leaping off. He spread his wings and took to the sky, leaving Hiccup behind to watch him go with confusion. As the Night Fury raced away with an unmatched speed, Hiccup sat there with his mouth slightly agape.

"Well, all right. I'll be here when you come back... Or even if you don't come back," Hiccup joked to himself, knowing full well that Toothless would return, but Hiccup couldn't go anywhere no matter

what.

It took most of the rest of the day before Toothless returned. By then, the storm had rolled on, leaving only pale grey clouds lingering off in the direction of the outcasts' island. To Hiccup's surprise and elation, his dragon was no alone. Behind him, four others forms were weaving their way through the sky. As Hiccup landed, two others came down alongside him while the other two hovered above, there not being enough room for them to settle down on the rock. Hiccup rushed up to Stormfly and scratched her under the chin affectionately.

"Toothless, I can't believe you managed to find them all! This is perfect! I think I have a plan now!"

\* \* \*

><p>The day couldn't have gone any better. Alvin returned on his new dragon to the cheers of the other outcasts. His Thunderdrum circled above the crowds that bellowed up to him. Alvin could feel his victory already. He felt it in the ripples of the Thunderdrum's muscles that worked to keep them airborne despite the ongoing downpour. The torrent of rain was settling, but not near as fast as Alvin would like. He ordered his dragon to the ledge at the top of the mountain where they settled and he slid off.</p>

He opened the door that led to the inside cave. It was squeeze but his dragon managed to push its way inside. The room was large, burning with the light of many torches. A circular table stood in the center, ready with a map for Alvin to give his attack plans. He wasn't completely set on them, yet. He had need of more dragons. And to earn the loyalty of the one he had obtained.

Turning, he looked at the dragon, which was following him, eyes wide and curious as it looked around the room.

"I suppose you deserve a name," Alvin mused, reaching a hand up. He scratched at his beard, but only managed to get his fingers caught in his tangles. He grunted angrily, ripping his hand away and pulling along a few strands with it. "How about Blood Cry? After all, you're a lovely blood red color and your ability is to scream your head off at others, 'eh?'"

Blood Cry seemed to ponder the name a moment before it grinned, tail wagging about behind it as it accepted the new name. It grumbled low and long, baring its teeth in satisfaction. It was like the dragon was testing out his new name in his own language.

Alvin chuckled mildly. "All right, Blood Cry. Before I let you officially become part of the crew, I need you to know what exactly it is we do around here."

Alvin turned and strode towards the map. Blood Cry followed along behind, keeping a distance between him and Alvin so as to not look too interested in what the man had to show him. When they reached the table, however, Blood Cry sniffed the air and reared up some to look at the paper decorated with strange marks.

"This splotch here is Berk. Ever heard of it?" Alvin asked, eyes wandering to his dragon.

Blood Cry narrowed his eyes at the mark, unsure what to make of it. He shook his head.

Alvin searched for a better way to describe the island besides its name. "You know of the island that rides dragons? Keeps them as pets? They're all about peace and happiness?"

At this, Blood Cry grimaced, his face hardening. The dragon was recalling the quick spite he had had with Toothless. He knew that Night Fury anywhere. It was the stupid one that had made dragons look like wimps by befriending the weakest looking human he could find. Blood Cry viewed the dragons of Berk as soft. He knew of other dragons who felt the same way. If they were to serve these fleshy creatures, then at least they needed to serve the ones like Alvin here. The only reason Blood Cry had allowed the twig boy to touch him earlier was because he was hoping the boy would be his key to meeting the Vikings standing back behind him. He had tried to fly away at first, wanting to avoid the boy, but realized it was now or never if he wanted to meet a superior Viking like Alvin.

Hiccup had read the emotions on Blood Cry's face all wrong.

Alvin knew the expression that was sitting upon Blood Cry's features well. He smirked. The victory would taste sweet. "So you do know what I'm talking about. Well, here's the deal. That island is full of pitiful beings like the boy you met earlier. He had to die. That island has to die. We can destroy it together, Blood Cry. Once we do, we can use our power to conquer other places. One by one, other villages will fall to our might. Dragons and humans both will bow down before us and we shall be known as rulers of all the islands. What do you say to that, boy?"

The feel of power was tantalizing to Blood Cry. The dragon hissed with pleasure, turning to Alvin with greedy eyes and grinning that strange, dragon grin of his. Alvin let a coy smile flash underneath his beard and was about to speak some more when the pounding of footsteps began to beat around the cave. He looked up to see most of his men returning from down below.

"We locked the teens back up in the dungeon," one man grunted as he led the others all forward to come around Alvin and the Thunderdrum.

"Good. We may have use for them later. For now, though, I have good news. Blood Cry here has agreed to help us destroy Berk!" Alvin announced, a dry laugh escaping his throat.

The men gave shouts of pleasure. They, too, could feel triumph coursing through their veins. It was within their grasps, now.

Alvin raised a hand to quiet them, then turned to Blood Cry. "Do you have any friends that might interested in joining the cause?"

Blood Cry gave a mighty roar. Not one of his full-fledged screeches, but it was mighty enough to blow Alvin back a couple feet. The Viking looked up and beamed wickedly. His eyes glowed with a hunger for vengeance and now that it was so close to him, he could nearly snag it between his fingers. He led Blood Cry to the door and flung it open. The rain had calmed some, though it was still falling faintly,

like a mist. The darkest of the clouds had moved on and now only pale, grey ones drifted along overhead.

Blood Cry bounded forward and out. He jumped from the ledge and into the air, his crimson body a fireball shooting through the haze. His body swelled and he released a sudden screech, as if signaling the world he was coming. Then he vanished. Alvin turned away to await his dragon's return by drinking heartily in the company of his followers.

The sun was setting when Blood Cry came back. Alvin could tell because the sky was a milky orange, glowing from behind the clouds that still overcasted the sky, though the rain had ceased. About twenty five dragons returned with the Thunderdrum, which was as many as Alvin had felt needed for the take over of Berk. Between his men and this dragon army, he knew they would be unstoppable.

They were down on the beach. Blood Cry ordered the dragons to line up and they did so. Each one stood at the edge of the water, feeling waves lap up around their back feet. They all hissed and roared, eyes glaring through the darkening air. Alvin examined each dragon - including a Skrill, a Whispering Death, another Thunderdrum or two, and the usual Berk dragons - before he would call forth the men he felt would serve him best from the backs of the beasts. He began to assign each one to a dragon he felt suited. The dragons were quick to accept the outcasts' trust, as Blood Cry had explained their motives to each of them. These dragons had only come because they, too, shared the same ideals.

The last four, a Nightmare, a Zippelback, a Nadder, and a Gronckle, didn't seem quite as fiery in nature as the others. Alvin's eyes narrowed, the dark orbs resting on each dragon. While they didn't have the attitudes of creatures worthy to battle, they had the appearance. Except maybe the Gronckle. Very few Gronckles had come, though, so Alvin was eager to accept them, knowing that, while they were dumb, their tough skin would prove exceedingly useful.

"Hog, Murphy, Beetjuice, and Boarhead, you can have these four," Alvin announced.

The four men wandered over. Boarhead claimed the Nightmare faster than the others could count (which wasn't very fast), while Hog went for the Zippelback, Beetjuice the Gronckle, and Murphy the Nadder.

Hog approached his dragon, the bumbling man looking at each head with a confused gaze. He started towards one head, stopped, then went towards the other. The two heads knocked at each other, fighting to see who would get to be the one that Hog rode on. The outcast blinked dumbly before turning to Alvin. "Er, boss. Which one do I ride?"

Alvin grunted, snorting loudly at the man. "Hammer, you can ride the other head."

The other man ran up and stood beside Hog while the two then proceeded to try and figure out which one of them should ride which head. Alvin, growing irritated from their bickering, wheeled on them to punch Hog in the gut and then kicked Hammer in the spot it hurts most. Hog doubled over in surprise while Hammer sank to his knees

before falling over, clutching between his legs as he winced in a wild pain.

"Shit, just pick one all ready," Alvin roared almost louder than Blood Cry could.

The sky became exceedingly dark as the sun finally sank below the skyline. The men, after some time, picked themselves up and eventually boarded their dragons. Alvin stood before them all, the rest of the few outcasts still gathered behind him. The leader smirked as he peered at each man and dragon through the gloomy darkness.

"Now, men. Lets fly."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup watched as Stormfly, Meatlug, Barf, Belch, and Hookfang took to the air and vanished into the smoke of the fading storm. He turned to glance at Toothless, who blinked with a calm intensity. The Night Fury was ready to redeem Hiccup and save the others. He was feeling impatient, every ounce of him ready to take from that rock and head straight for the island. Hiccup came close to him, though, pressing his hands onto his neck soothingly.</p>

"Relax, bud. We'll be going soon. Not yet, though. Just a little bit longer," Hiccup sighed, hoping to Thor and Odin and all the other gods above that Astrid and the others would still be alive to save.

Hiccup bent down to his knees and wrapped his arms around Toothless' neck. He suppressed a heaving shutter, wanting to break down until there was nothing left. He managed to hold himself together, though. He released Toothless, forcing himself to relax and try to concentrate on what he needed to do. He needed to be ready, like Toothless was. If he was going to lead the others to safety, he couldn't let himself seem weak and pitiful.

He looked up and Toothless craned his head around to return the look. Seeing the bravery in his friend's eyes sparked Hiccup's confidence. With Toothless, he knew he could accomplish whatever was thrown at him. Even if it didn't work out completely, at least he knew he would always have someone there for him. Someone to rely on that could never be replaced. It hurt, sometimes, to think about the day that he shot Toothless from the sky. It was the day that Hiccup stole Toothless' freedom from him. Looking at the Night Fury now, he could only hoped that their friendship made up for the horrendous thing he almost did. For the fact that he almost drove a knife through his best friend's heart. He almost did. But he didn't.

Hiccup dwelled on these thoughts for a long while. He wondered what Toothless thought when he saw him. Hiccup had saved Berk, but only because he had had Toothless there to help him. Did the dragon see him as a friend, too? Or just a simple companion? Just the boy who gave him the ability to fly? Surely the event at Snoggletog had proved that Toothless did hold him dear. Hiccup couldn't help feeling that the Night Fury should actually hate him.

Looking back at Toothless' prosthetic, Hiccup knew that his friend technically didn't even need him any more if he chose to keep this

one. Yet, here he was. Ready to fight for him, to save his friends, and to protect him. It made Hiccup smile.

As the grin drew across his face, the sun touched the horizon. The fading light dropped the temperature a few degrees and set the sky into a fierce glow. The orange was blazing so dark that it seemed almost red. The clouds shifting along made the light scatter like ants when their nest was destroyed. It was beautiful, yet sad to see.

"Lets go, Toothless," Hiccup breathed, pulling himself onto his dragon's back. He clutched hard at Toothless' neck, determined not to fall off since he didn't have the saddle with him.

Toothless took to the air and in the direction of the island where the outcasts lived. As the sky faded away to blackness, Toothless' dark body began to blend in with the surrounding world. He vanished, invisible among the air. Since clouds still drifted along above, there were no stars to be seen, making it easier to blend in. Hiccup hugged himself close to Toothless' body, trying to hide from view of prying eyes as they neared the island. He breathed deep and silently, listening to the world around him.

Roaring could be heard as they neared the dreaded island. Every now and then a blast of orange fire lit the air as a dragon spat it out. The beasts were swirling and dipping, maneuvering. Hiccup could hear Alvin's voice, though it kept changing pitches. He discovered that it was because the man was riding the Thunderdrum and was moving about, sparring with the others. Toothless raced around to the far side to avoid detection even further. The Night Fury came up and hugged the side of the mountain, clutching it. He slowly climbed around it until he was able to peer around the side and see the dragons and Vikings down and above the beach. Hiccup felt Toothless' body rumble with a growl beneath his hands. He was holding his dragon tight, dangling practically as Toothless held vertical against the mountainside.

"Give the sign, bud," Hiccup ordered.

Toothless opened his mouth, building up gas before alighting it and shooting at the water beneath where the dragons were battling. Steam rose up from where it hit while the water was also sent scattered, blown about by the blast. The purple light faded, leaving a bewildered flock of dragons and an angry Alvin.

"Whose dragon was that?" the man bellowed.

Before anyone could answer, Stormfly, Meatlug, Barf, Belch, and Hookfang began to act as strange as they could before they locked into a mock fight, hitting each other just hard enough to seem convincing. They shot flames at each other and roared with a violent rage, pretending to have a heated debate over something. This new predicament soon caught the attention of all the outcasts, especially the ones on dragons that were trying to dodge the struggle. Hammer, Hog, Murphy, Boarhead, and Beetjuice cried out orders, attempting to gain control, but were unsuccessful.

Toothless, with the distraction underway, quickly climbed around to the front side of the mountain unnoticed and slipped into one of the caves. He bounded along, listening to the directions that Hiccup

whispered to him, leading him down to the dungeon. As they arrived into the room, Hiccup had to squint to make out the bodies of his friends who were just barely visible in the faint glow.

"Hiccup?" Astrid cried, surprise evident in her voice. "We thought you were dead!"

"Dude, you're alive," Snotlout exclaimed.

Fishlegs jumped to his feet. "Toothless!"

Hiccup swung off his dragon, landing on the ground and running up to inspect the chains. Ignoring the biting cold of the cave and the horrid memories, Hiccup motioned Toothless over and the Night Fury approached. While Hiccup held the chain firm, the dragon used his powerful fire to blast it a part. It singed Hiccup in the process and his arms burned, but it didn't matter to him. They had to act quickly before Alvin or anyone else just so happened to come along for some reason or another.

"How did you survive?" Ruffnut asked.

Tuffnut elbowed her in the ribs. "He's the Dragon Conquerer, duh."

"Well I'm the pain-in-the-ass conquerer," Ruffnut fired, shoving her brother over.

He hit the ground, crying out in pain. "Dude, I'm still sore."

"Should have thought about that before you challenged me."

"Guys, be quiet," Hiccup hissed, moving on to free them all. "Your dragons are outside creating a distraction, but I don't know for how long."

"Our dragons? How did you get them?" Fishlegs asked.

"Toothless did."

The last chain snapped in two. While the teens still had the cuffs on, at least they were freed from the wall. That was all that mattered currently.

"Go ahead and get the others, Toothless, we'll be there in a minute," Hiccup ordered.

Toothless nodded and dashed out of the cave and up. The Night Fury was going to go up to the beach and fire another blast. This one would let Stormfly and the others know to be rid of their current riders to come down and fetch their actual ones. Hopefully, the teens would arrive at that right moment in order to hop right on and they could take off. The question now would be if Alvin and the others would try to follow them on their own dragons. Even if they did, Hiccup just hoped that Toothless and the other Berk dragons would have the energy to just beat them back home where the other Vikings and dragons could back them up.

"Let's go, guys," Hiccup ordered, turning to flee after his

dragon.

Astrid grabbed his hand and he stopped, turning to face her. Snotlout, the twins, and Fishlegs all scampered by, heading out of the cave before them. The faint light of the cave made it hard to see, but Hiccup could still make out the discolored flesh of Astrid's bruise. It didn't seem to be paining her anymore and her eyes were filled with a sense of spirit and bravery.

"You're amazing," she whispered, pulling him in and kissing him.

Hiccup, though adrenaline and fear had been pulsing through his body just minutes before, was eager to give in to the kiss. Her lips tasted of sweat and meat, a disgusting mixture, but Hiccup didn't mind. He was certain he was no better at the moment. He smiled into it, feeling his energy spike with the emotion fluttering in his chest. When she pulled away, he felt almost happy, oblivious for those few seconds as to what was going on around them, the danger they were in, and what needed to be done.

"Thanks, Astrid," he breathed.

She smiled cunningly at him, then began to yank him along up and out of the cave. The others had stopped a little ways ahead up the slope, waiting. Once they were in sight, the group began to move together, like a stampeding herd. Their breathing was loud and shallow, the sound hitting the walls of the cave and bouncing around them. Each one perspired greatly from fear and eagerness to escape.

Then they were in the open.

Toothless was waiting for them, blasting at oncoming Vikings that rushed towards him. He must have just been discovered because Alvin was shouting wildly for his men to forget about a Nadder, Gronckle, Zippyleback, and Nightmare, and to focus on the Night Fury. The dragons in the air veered around, their cries drumming through the night. Hiccup bolted up to Toothless, pulling himself on and wretched his gaze up to find Stormfly and the others touching down to accept their true riders.

The other teens hoisted themselves onto their dragons and then they took to the air. Toothless was last, climbing into the sky. While their friends raced off into the distance, Hiccup turned back to see Alvin ordering the others to stop for a moment.

"Toothless, wait," Hiccup said gently once they were out of sight in the darkness. They hovered and both looked back, trying to hear what Alvin would order next.

"Men! Gather your ships and weapons! We're taking this war to Berk!"

Hiccup's stomach flipped and his heart sank. He bit his bottom lip so hard that it flamed up with pain. He bent over, patting Toothless on the neck and sighing deeply. Dread consumed him, knowing they needed to be ready for the upcoming battle, and that Berk had barely any time to prepare.

"Come on, bud. We gotta' get home. Now."

\* \* \*

><p>Wheeee~</p>

I hope I managed to trick you guys in the last Chapter about Blood Cry. Made him seem all innocent when he's actually evil xD Yay for unreliable narrators!... x3

I feel a bit yucky about this chapter. Hope it's just because it's cold outside and it makes me feel sick... If it actually is a yucky chapter, I apologize heavily. It wasn't my favorite chapter to write, but it was obviously necessary. I'm really pumped for these next couple chapters and hope you, my dear readers, are also excited!

Review, please?

Love,

Deyoxis

## 6. Berk on Fire

I apologize for the delay. I had a ten page paper to write and some computer problems to boot. Not my most exciting weekend xD

I also got extremely distracted by Dreamwork Dragons: Wild Skies on Cartoonnetwork. If you guys haven't played it yet, go do that when you finish reading this chapter. I highly recommend it. I would also suggest making an account to save your progress. But it's actually not a bad game. The best is that it gives you great insight as to how each dragon reacts to the "trust" process, how they fly, and... while it's not exactly what Berk looks like, it gives you a good feel of the island and how big it is.

Thank you to my lovely reviewers! I honestly don't have much to say in response to you guys other than your reviews are the reason I'm still writing this (:

\*\*Just me:\*\* With your thoughts on whether dragons could understand Norse or not, lets put it this way. I think the dragons understand what they want to hear and what they think they hear. Kind of like dogs. They recognize the tone of the voice, mostly. When Hiccup was scolding Toothless in Gift of the Night Fury, lets be honest, he didn't sound mad at all. He sounded amused and was wagging his finger around so Toothless probably thought Hiccup was trying to be silly or something. But, well, Toothless obviously has some sort of recognition of words because he's able to react to Hiccup's commands and plans. Like in the most recent episode when they had to break through the ice to get the key piece. Hiccup didn't tell Toothless to burn through the ice but he understood, anyways. So he had to have been paying attention to the conversation and understood enough to do what Hiccup wanted him to. I can only assume that most of the dragons are like this (unless they're Hookfang and they just ignore their owner anyways xD). ...Did that make sense? Haha.

\*\*Chapter Six: Berk on Fire\*\*

Toothless caught back up with the others in no time. His dark form slunk through the air up behind Stormfly causing Astrid to fire a glance over her shoulder, at first thinking it was an enemy. It took her many seconds to recognize the shape of Toothless.

"Hiccup! Oh, gosh, I about had Stormfly poison spike you. What in Thor's name were you doing?" she demanded.

The night was difficult to see through with no moon or starlight to provide some lighting, hidden behind the lingering clouds. Hiccup had to focus to see the outline of the dragons and teens around him. They looked like dark blobs. Meatlug's tossed about in her bumble bee like way of flying. She nearly knocked into Barf and Belch but the dragon dodged hurriedly, crying out angrily at her as she stumbled by.

"Sorry," Fishlegs apologized. "It's really hard to see right now."

"Toothless and I overheard Alvin. They're going to head for Berk now."

Astrid's eyes widened, but Hiccup couldn't see. "Now? Those idiots probably don't even know how to ride their dragons well enough, yet. This could be easy."

Hiccup couldn't quite feel the same confidence she had.

"At least that gives us more time than we think. Their ships will take a while to get to Berk, so maybe that'll give us until at least morning if not later to get Berk prepared," Astrid continued.

Hiccup perked up just the tiniest bit at this thought. Ships did take longer to get places than dragons. That gave them ample more time to prepare for the upcoming battle. Maybe things wouldn't be so bad after all. Beneath him, Toothless roared softly in agreement. The Night Fury beat his wings hard, dashing his way to the front where he took the lead, zipping through the air. The wings of the other dragons could be heard behind them, flapping wildly to keep up and get back to Berk as fast as they could manage.

They reached the edge of the clouds and a world of sky opened up to them. Moonlight came flooding down, the brightness dancing off the silvery waves of the ocean and the shiny scales of the dragons. It was a full moon, go figure, hanging in the air like a giant orb. The stars that dotted the sky around it looked like little holes in the black canvas above them. They could now see each other, everyone's faces practically glowed in the pale light. The dragons seemed to shimmer, sparkling with each movement they made as ocean spray slid along their bodies. It was a magical scene and one that, if war wasn't looming so near in the future, that Hiccup felt would have been a wonderful moment to remember. The grim looks on everyone's faces, including the dragons, though, reminded him of what was to come and what they still had to endure.

The thought of his father came to mind.

"Oh, Odin, help me," he breathed to himself, but Toothless heard easily, craning his head around some to glance up at Hiccup. "It's okay, Toothless. Just wondering how I'm going to admit all this to my

father. It's not like he can look any angrier than he ever does at me so maybe it won't be so bad."

Toothless whined softly, snorting and shaking his head. Hiccup knew instantly that his friend was trying to tell him that his father's reaction needed to be the least of his worries. What happened all ready happened and there was no changing it. The thing that they needed to be prepared for now was taking down Alvin. Hiccup could feel Toothless' muscles tensing with anticipation.

\* \* \*

><p>Stoick and the majority of the village had gathered in the Great Hall. After searching all day, many of the men and women were too tired to go out for another search. They were gathered together to eat and reenergize so that they would be capable of setting out again soon. Stoick was stiff, wanting to head back out now. He knew he could. Thornado had gotten word of what had happened while off visiting some friends, and had come back to the island to help. The blue Thunderdrum waited by the door of the Great Hall.</p>

"Stoick, eat. You can't go out and try to find Hiccup through the night without having some energy," Gobber was ordering, keeping the village chief from going to his dragon by piling more food on Stoick's plate.

Stoick slid the plate away from him, muttering icily under his breath. "I can't just sit around eating, Gobber. My son is out there. Who knows what Alvin is doing to him."

Gobber hardened and pushed the plate back. He took his hammer-hand and pressed it into Stoick's chest to force the man to sit. He then motioned to the food again. "Eat first, and then you can go out all you want. Besides, Toothless is out there. Maybe he's even returning now with Hiccup on his back."

At that instant, the doors to the Great Hall swung open. Loud squeals interrupted the idle chatter as the hinges moved. Thornado bounced away to avoid being hit, the Thunderdrum looking over excitedly to see who had entered. The chill of the wind swept through the room, causing the torches and candles to flicker, but none blew out. The dazzling gleam of the hall remained as steady as ever, but even seemed to grow in intensity once the village realized who it was walking through the door.

"Hiccup!" Stoick cried out, his voice filled with as much glee as he dare muster in front of his people. He stood up so fast, he sent his chair behind him sprawling to the ground. Darting through the crowd, he ran up to where Hiccup, Toothless, and the rest were slowly entering through the door. "You're alive!"

Hiccup didn't even have time to respond before Stoick grabbed him, hoisting him up in elation. He held his son close to him, feeling the worries of the day finally managing to drift away. His son blubbered incoherently, asking for Stoick to put him down. He finally did, unsure as to why Hiccup didn't seem to share the same feelings that he did right now.

Hiccup, once safely back on the ground, sucked in a breath, "Dad, Alvin and his men are coming! They're going to try and destroy

Berk."

Stoick's features grew grim. He stood up straight, gaze hardening at the news. He managed to remain calm, though the villagers behind him who had heard began to mutter restlessly. The chief looked up at the other teens, whose families were crowding around them. Then Stoick saw the evidence of what had happened.

Astrid bruised face, Tuffnut's bruised body, the scar along Ruffnut's cheek, and Snotlout's bandaged head. He looked back down to Hiccup, wondering what wounds his own son might be wearing.

Hiccup figured out what his father was looking for and sighed. "I only have a couple bruises dad. Alvin also nearly drowned me... twice."

"Drowned you?"

"Yeah, he held be under in a pool and then this morning he flew me out to the middle of the ocean and left me there. Toothless found me."

Stoick's expression grew puzzled. "He flew you?"

Hiccup's all ready sullen face grew melancholy and bitter. He had to gaze at his feet for a moment, searching for the right words. He seemed to be growing paler and ignored the sick stirring in his stomach. At that time, he recognized the feeling of hunger that had become familiar to him recently. The smell of the food in the Great Hall called to him, but he couldn't eat until he had told his father the truth. He clung to what little courage he had in him and turned his gaze back up. "I taught Alvin and the others how to ride dragons, dad."

"You what?" Stoick practically roared, his plump cheeks seeming to flush a deep shade of red. He reached out and grabbed Hiccup's shirt, pulling his son close to him, fury blazing in his eyes hotter than dragon fire. "Why would you do that?"

Hiccup felt more fear than ever before. Not even Alvin had quite the effect his father had on him. Hiccup hated letting Stoick down. It was a greater wound than being stabbed ever would. It made him ache to see the disappointment so clear in his father's eyes. His face burned hot with shame and he didn't even have the heart to defend himself.

Astrid rushed forward at that moment, leaving her parents baffled as she tried to pry Stoick's hand off of Hiccup's shirt. She looked at her leader with defiance, shouting, "He did it to save us. Alvin was going to torture and kill me and the others. If Hiccup hadn't done anything, none of us would probably be here right now."

Stoick finally released Hiccup and wheeled away, his cape flinging about him in a flurry. He paced up and down for a moment, trying to gather himself and fit everything together. His son had saved his friends by teaching their greatest enemy how to ride their new allies. Wars until now had always been human verse human or human verse dragon. Now, human and dragons would be facing each other on the same sides yet opposing sides. It seemed as if the dragons were divided, much like the Vikings were, so now both sides were drawing

each in their own personal wars to gain an advantage. The question would be who would come out on top?

Turning back to Hiccup, Stoick saw the look on his son's face. The expression, the emotion. It was of one who felt utterly pathetic in the eyes of his father. A failure. What Hiccup had looked like for most of his life. Stoick had thought that that time had ended, but here again, he was giving his son a reason to feel that humiliation. And for what? For trying to save his friends?

Astrid was standing beside Hiccup, a hand on his shoulder comfortingly. She was glaring up at Stoick with the gaze of a fierce Viking. She had earned her right to live through whatever Alvin had put her through. Behind her, Snotlout, the twins, and Fishlegs were all watching, their gazes varying. Snotlout stood beside his father, seemed to not know whether to laugh at Hiccup or feel sympathy. He owed Hiccup his life here, but he was also normally the jerk who bagged on him. Tuffnut seemed passive while Ruffnut was frowning lightly, arms crossed. Fishlegs just looked terrified and was clutching Meatlug in the best hug he could manage.

Toothless was on the other side of Hiccup. Stoick hadn't even noticed that the dragon had brought forth his teeth and was baring them. The Night Fury's green depths were piercing and vivid. They locked on to Stoick's, telling him that he needed to let the anger for Hiccup go now. Stoick didn't particularly want to face the dragon's wrath and he could feel his frustration with Hiccup fading all ready. His son, since the defeat of the Red Death, had been making mistakes still, but had fixed every single one of them and never let Stoick down in the end. He had to believe that Hiccup could do that now.

"Look, this isn't important. What we need to focus on now is getting ready to face Alvin, his men, and their dragons. How much time do we have?" he finally asked, releasing the rest of his anger in a rapid exhale of breath. He remained serious, however, prepared to do what was needed to face Alvin.

"We think until morning," Astrid piped up, helping to move the situation beyond the previous argument.

Hiccup seemed to - not really cheer up, but managed to get serious. He turned to Toothless, placing a hand on his dragon comfortingly to calm him down. Toothless snorted before making a motion with his head to tell Hiccup to follow him.

"Astrid, dad, I'll be right back," Hiccup explained before he turned and dashed after Toothless, who fled the Great Hall.

Toothless didn't even wait up. Hiccup was a bit confused, having thought the Night Fury would have just flown them to wherever he wanted to go. That wasn't the case, however, so Hiccup, despite his protesting muscles, had to bound after Toothless as fast as he could manage. The dragon led him into the village and wandered over to Gobber's workshop. Toothless sniffed around a bit before locating what he was looking for, snagging it with his teeth, and dragging it out from beneath a bench.

Hiccup had to find a light source. He eventually retrieved a torch and lit it, holding it over what Toothless had retrieved to see what it was. "Your old tail and saddle. Are we going through this again,

bud? Are you sure you don't want to keep that tail. You can fly all on your own with it."

Toothless glanced back at the prosthetic he was currently wearing. He cocked his head at it, as if trying to decide his thoughts. After only a couple seconds, he growled warily at it and turned back to the older fin. The skull stared up at them from the red-painted flap. The Night Fury sniffed it before nosing it towards Hiccup, who was still befuddled that Toothless would want to go back to wearing the old one.

"Why, Toothless?" he asked, shrugging his shoulders in question.

The Night Fury made a couple soft noises before leaning forward. He pressed his nose gently against Hiccup's own prosthetic, cooing louder. He pulled away and placed his nose on his old prosthetic, cooing again. When he pulled back, he turned around and held his tail out for Hiccup to remove his current tail piece.

Running his hands through his hair, Hiccup struggled to make sense of what his best friend was trying to tell him. He looked down at his leg and then over at the saddle and old fin. He frowned at them, wondering what was so special about them to Toothless that he would give up his freedom to wear them. Maybe Toothless just wanted things to end the way they started. Their friendship existed because Toothless had needed Hiccup to control his tail. Was Toothless worried that they couldn't be friends if Hiccup was partially in control?

That couldn't be it, though. Toothless had just saved him because of their friendship. They were clearly still together despite the change in tail pieces.

But it was their connection. Hiccup blinked in understanding. Toothless and him were more in sync, more connected, more together than ever when they had to work as one. They had to think the same way, feel the same things, and practically achieve viewing from the eyes of each other. It wasn't that way when Toothless could fly by himself. Hiccup wasn't a factor in control, Toothless was the only guide then. It was a barrier between them that neither Toothless nor Hiccup wanted.

So Hiccup removed the current tail and attached the old one. As he secured the saddle, Toothless turned his head around, crooning. He seemed to be tweeting with the sounds of a young bird. Happy to just be alive. The Night Fury grinned, pink gums lacking teeth for the time being.

When Hiccup was done, he went back over to the torch, which he had hooked up against the side of Gobber's workshop. He extinguished it before he and his best friend left. As Hiccup started to make his way back to the Great Hall, Toothless stopped. His elongated scales quivered, moving up and down, almost like they were testing the air. He cocked his head before a rumble that sounded eerily like thunder emitted in the distance.

Hiccup turned his gaze upward and saw the stars staring down at them. "That's weird..."

When he looked back down, Toothless was looking at him with a look of

apprehension. The Night Fury lowered himself and Hiccup quickly swung himself into the saddle. He snagged at the chain on his vest, hooking himself on. He felt the sudden rush of being thrown upwards and then they were sailing over everything. The churning waters were the only thing heard for a while as the two flew out into nowhere. Hiccup tossed his head back and forth, wondering where the thunder sound could have come from.

Then he saw a light. Fire blazed along the horizon of the sea, smoke billowing up in tendrils. The forms of ships skipping across the ocean could be seen and Hiccup felt his stomach clench.

"Oh, Thor," Hiccup breathed, his voice barely escaping his throat as it tightened with unease. Beneath him, Toothless' body vibrated with a growl of warning and anger. The Night Fury let out a screech, but it didn't slow the ships. It was responded with another burst of the thunder-like noise splitting the air.

The ships were skimming the water, held by ropes which were being gripped by dragons. The outcasts' dragons. The creatures beat their wings furiously, attempting to keep the boats from falling and crashing into the water. The large, hulking ships carried catapults and a couple scores of men. Instead of trying to spend all night sailing, Alvin was having the dragons fly the ships to Berk. It was much the same idea Hiccup had had to get the baby dragons back to Berk back around Snoggletog. It was almost sickening to see the idea used in this way.

Hiccup bent down, touching the side of Toothless' neck. "We gotta' go warn my dad and the others. We need to be ready now."

Toothless nodded his head before veering and speeding back towards Berk. It took no time for the Night Fury to arrive back home at full speed, but Hiccup knew it wouldn't be too much longer before Alvin and the other arrives. Toothless landed on the steps of the Great Hall where Hiccup clambered off. He practically jumped up the last couple steps before swinging the door open wide. He rushed in, Toothless on his heels.

The Vikings were all gathered around the center fire pit. Astrid and the others were off to the side, gulping down food in mighty chunks and inhaling water. Ruffnut reached over and grabbed the chicken leg that her brother still had on his plate. He shoved her away before both winced in obvious pain from the sudden movements.

"Stop it, you two. Wait until you're both fully recovered to go at it again," Astrid sighed.

Snotlout laughed. "Wimpy, can't even handle a small shove."

Ruffnut raised a foot and kicked Snotlout off of the bench they were sitting on. He went tumbling, his injured head getting tossed around and he cried out in agony. When he stopped rolling, he clutched his skull, muttering under his breath.

Astrid grunted, then turned as Hiccup approached. He was hungry, his stomach clawing itself. He grabbed Tuffnut's chicken leg while the boy was too distracted to protest. He devoured it faster than he thought possible, immediately feeling like he was going to be sick once it was down to nothing but the bone. He moaned, regretting that

decision.

"You shouldn't eat so fast," Astrid pointed out.

Hiccup swallowed a bit of water she handed him. "You're a little too later on the info there."

Tossing the cup aside, he charged into the throng of men and women. Stoick was speaking, his booming voice resonating around the room and capturing everyone's attention. He was talking war strategies and ideas for when Alvin and the others arrived. He was putting the dragons into play, knowing that there would probably be battles in the sky now. Hiccup shimmied his way through some more people and finally manage to come up beside his uncle Spitelout, who stood to the right of Stoick.

"Hiccup?" Spitelout questioned, looking down at him with a puzzle gaze.

Hiccup waved awkwardly. "Uh, hi. Can I just, you know, squeeze by you real quick and get to my dad?"

Spitelout stepped back as much as he could. Hiccup tried to push himself through the gap, never so grateful for having been small. He managed to get all the way past and then collided with the body of his father. Stoick paused in his speech, looking down at Hiccup with a fierce gaze, not of anger at Hiccup, but determination to take down Alvin.

"Oh, hey, dad. Well, you see. There's been a slight change of plans," Hiccup started.

Stoick let out a deep sigh. "What is it, son?"

"Well, Alvin's dragons are kind of flying the ships here so I think they'll be here in about five to ten minutes, more or less."

Hiccup ducked as a cry of rage exploded from his father's mouth. The chief of the tribe jumped into action, his arms flinging out and about, ordering men and women to get to their posts or their dragons. The villagers grew into a frenzy, shoving each other aside as they scattered, each one hurrying to get to their stations. Hiccup watched as Stoick quickly called out to Mulch and Bucket, ordering them to lead the pregnant women, the elderly, and the children to safety by getting as far away as they could. The two nodded and slipped into the madness. The mass squeezed out of the Great Hall, leaving Hiccup, the other teens, Stoick, Toothless, and Thornado standing idly in the sudden silence.

"Hiccup, you and the others need to go with Mulch and Bucket," Stoick announced.

Astrid flew to her feet. "But we can help! We're the best at riding our dragons, you know that!"

"I know, which is why I need you with Mulch and the others. If any of Alvin's men break through and storm the island, I need people there to protect them. You have to do this."

Astrid stomped a foot on the ground, seeming ready to argue more. She

had nothing to say against that, however, and was left in a rut. She turned and glanced at the others, who were all now standing. No one looked thrilled, as each one of them held the powerful desire to get back at Alvin for what he and his men did to them. At the same time, the apprehension of seeing Alvin again was still sitting in the dark pits of their memories and they did not want to come face to face with the leader of their enemies.

The lighting of the room had seemed to dim with absence of the other villagers. Shadows played across the walls and across the faces of the people in the room. They danced and twisted, seeming a fearful beauty. The faces of the people in the room were grim. Thornado and Toothless' were no different, their mouths hard lines across their muzzles. Their eyes gleamed, bright with the reflections of fire.

"Lets get going, guys. We need to figure out where our dragons are waiting," Astrid finally announced, waving a hand for them all to follow.

She started off with Fighlegs scurrying along behind her. The twins and Snotlout followed very soon after and, in only a minute, the five of them were silhouettes standing at the entrance of the Great Hall. They paused for a moment before they appeared to exchange words and then plunged down the stairs, vanishing from view.

Hiccup stood alone with his father and their dragons. He recalled the earlier conversation and the fury in Stoick's eyes. He winced, turning and looking up at the man.

"Dad, I need to stay and help here."

Stoick shook his head, his vast beard scratching along his armor.  
"No, you don't. Go with the others, we've got it."

"But dad-"

Stoick's eyes hardened with concern. "Hiccup, you have nothing to prove. Just because you taught Alvin how to train dragons doesn't mean that you need to make it up by staying back and fighting."

"That's not what I was going to say, dad! Listen to me," Hiccup demanded, taking a step towards the man. His own green eyes looked up, proclaiming that he wanted Stoick's attention and he wanted it now.

Stoick, surprised by the outburst, went silent and waited for Hiccup to explain.

"Maybe I can get Toothless to reason with Alvin's dragons. I don't know what their motives are for wanting to help him, but maybe I can make it an easier fight if we can get his dragons on our side. Besides, you know how useful toothless would be in this fight. We can blend into the night. That could give us the chance to attack Alvin's ships from behind."

Stoick pulled back into his own thoughts. Hiccup watched his father pace. The anticipation for the coming fight was rising up like a storm. The emotions crashing and swirling all around the island were

like a maelstrom, warning of the impending battle that was soon to take place. It felt like a weight had been placed at one side of the island, putting Berk off balance. The island was going to start sinking soon if something wasn't done, but all anyone could do was panic and watch with dread.

Finally, Stoick nodded, "All right. But once you take out their ships and if Alvin's dragons don't listen, I want you to go find and help your friends. Deal?"

"Deal."

As the two turned to the door, Gobber stood in the frame. His outline was pale from the moon outside, but the fire inside made his face looking haunting. The man glanced back out before looking back in. He pointed tot he outside world and cried out, "They're about here, Stoick! We need you out here to lead us!"

Stoick nodded. He jogged to the door, pushing past Gobber. Thornado moved out after him. On the stairs, Stoick flung himself up upon his dragon and the Thunderdrum beat into the sky. Behind, Gobber scanned the skyline.

Hiccup came up beside the blacksmith, "What are you looking for?"

Gobber looked back down and laughed. Suddenly, the sound of wings could be heard. The wings creaked like that of old bones. When the dragon settled down at the bottom of the Great Hall steps, Hiccup understood why. It was the Bone Knapper that Gobber had befriended. The creature roared as soft as it could manage while Gobber hobbled down the stairs. He glanced back up at Hiccup, smirking.

"Didn't think you'd see him again, did you?" Gobber chuckled, reaching up and scratching the Bone Knapper under the chin.

The hulking creature let out a purring noise, welcoming the scratch with a grin of satisfaction. Once Gobber stopped, it used its nose to help him climb onto its back. Standing up, it let out its rock-shattering roar before leaping into the air. Hiccup watched it beat the air with pounding flaps before turning and following Stoick out towards the docks.

Looking out, Hiccup could see the ships and dragons of the outcasts approaching fast. The torches the outcasts held on the ships blazed their path, lighting up the world out at sea. The dragons' outlines were visible as the moon's light reflected off their scales, creating an eerie glow hovering in the air. The wind was picking up and whipped around the island like cold fingers, brushing against the skin of villagers and reminding Hiccup of the chill of the dungeon. He shivered, but swallowed down the lump in his throat and sought out his courage. He looked behind him to see Toothless waiting, form hunched and ready to take off.

Hiccup nodded, pulling himself into the saddle. Once he was hooked on, he wound his hands tight around the grip he had made for himself. He hunched his back, ready for the flight and saw the dark, pitch black wings of his Night Fury spread out to the sides, stretching out further beyond the width of the stairs. The dragon knelt down before pushing up, wings pressing down, and then was airborne. Hiccup always

felt safe in the air because he knew he could do anything while with Toothless. Back in the dungeon, back on the outcasts' island, he had done enough to survive. Now, though, it would take the help of his best friend for Hiccup to free his home from the monster that was about to besiege it.

A thunderous roar bellowed through the night air. The village seemed to rattle under its presence. It signaled the arrival of Alvin. Hiccup adjusted and got Toothless soaring higher. Soon, the two floated invisibly above Alvin and his ships, waiting for their moment to strike.

The dragons released the ropes. The ships beat into the waves, causing an onslaught of crashes as water met water in a desperate attempt to flee the wooden masses. The ships maneuvered just off shore, turning to allow the catapults the best aim they could manage. The ships that didn't have the catapults continued forward, heading for the docks with hoards of men who would storm the island.

Thornado appeared out above the docks, the blue Thunderdrum carrying Stoick upon his back. Behind him, many of the villagers sat upon their dragons. Gobber and his Bone Knapper hovered just below Thornado, screeching a warning for Alvin to not come any closer.

"Alvin!" Stoick cried. "This is your one chance to turn around and not return. We're ready for you."

Alvin cackled, the laugh skimming through the air and hitting the ears of the villagers that gathered at the docks, along the cliffs, and amongst the houses. Weapons were raised, ready to kill, but none of them could escape the uncomfortable feeling that etched its way across their hearts as they heard Alvin.

"Well now, Stoick. I think you're underestimating the power of our new allies," the man chuckled, patting Blood Cry on the head.

The Thunderdrum smiled a dangerous smile. The wicked gleam in his eyes was clear to Hiccup. Alvin's dragon would not be persuaded to stop the onslaught. Hiccup could only hope that not all of Alvin's dragons were so. He shook his head at himself, unable to believe he didn't see it when he first met the red Thunderdrum. The creature hadn't seemed evil then...

Stoick blinked and said, "As you are underestimating ours."

That was when Blood Cry swelled up. The Thunderdrum released a cry into the air that burst like powerful waves at Stoick, Thornado, and the others. They all scattered, bursting in one direction or another to dodge the cry. It kept pummeling straight on and soon splintered one of the houses lined along the cliffside. With that roar, it was all hell. Nightmares, Nadders, Zippelbacks, Gronckles, Thunderdrums, a Bone Knapper, a Skrill, and a Whispering Death burst into shrill screams as the battle exploded.

Flames lit the air. Hiccup wheeled back as homes went up in smoke. Orange wisps sped along the wood and ash flew into the sky. The war cries of men and woman fueled the fight on as outcasts reached the docks and began to stream off in a hoard. Swords clashed, hammers

were thrown, and the sounds of dragons colliding vibrated through the night. It smelled of smoke and blood as the crimson substance was shed upon the ground with fresh wounds.

Peering around, trying to tear himself from the sight, he looked down to the ships with catapults. Rocks were sent soaring through the air as the weapons unleashed them in a mighty swing. Hiccup watched one hit the bakery. A Gronckle came by a minute later, delivering another boulder for the catapult. As the meaty creature flew away, Hiccup bent down. Toothless looked back at him and Hiccup pointed at the ship where the men rushed to try and reload the weapon.

Toothless nodded and climbed into the air. He looked down, gauging the distance. As he finally let himself plummet in his dive bomb, the piercing scream he was known for shattered through even the drumming of battle. Hiccup could hardly hear above the rushing of the wind and Toothless. The Night Fury pulled up at that moment, an orange burst shooting out and hitting the ship in an explosion of purple and blue flames. Toothless retreated back into the night to vanish from view.

Berk's inhabitants broke out into cheers. Hiccup realized, at that moment, that the fighting had ceased as outcast and villager alike turned to see what Toothless would do. Upon discovering that the Night Fury was assisting them, the island of Berk was all ready celebrating. The outcasts muttered bitterly, wondering who would take out the dark dragon.

Alvin screamed into the air with frustration. His sudden noise shocked the island back into the fight and everything resumed.

Hiccup looked down to see that the island was burning. Fire from dragons on both sides were sending everything up in flames. Villagers who weren't currently engaged in battle rushed to protect the most valuable things and take them to safety. The flames bathed everything in an orange glow. Like the Great Hall, the shadows danced. They splayed across everything, giving the whole realm a dauntingly frightening look. Hiccup could barely recognize his home.

"Okay, lets go for that one," he muttered to Toothless, spotting another catapult being reloaded.

The two repeated the process. They managed to knock out three more ships, leaving four left, only one of which still had a catapult. The other three were empty, docked as their crews were on land now. Hiccup was about to order for the next one when a blast of white-hot fire grazed just past them. Hiccup recoiled and Toothless dived away to avoid another shot taken at them.

When he was able to locate the predator, Hiccup found the Skrill speeding towards them. The monstrous beast opened its mouth, saliva dripping down from its fangs. Its whole body was alight with lightning. Hiccup could see that its rider was no longer there, either shot off or fallen off during the fight. The creature was working on its own instinct now. It was coming for them.

"Toothless, think you could reason with it?" Hiccup begged, gripping tight to the handle and helping his dragon to move around to face the new enemy.

Toothless opened his mouth and a flood of desperate noises escaped his maw. The Skrill shrieked in response and a column of fire spewed out from its throat. Toothless spun to the right, just barely missing. Hiccup could feel the heat soar past. His hair seemed to go on end and he looked up to see the Skrill come close. Toothless rolled again, once again crying out, trying to converse with it. The Skrill continued to ignore him.

Hiccup, seeing that reasoning was pointless, took an intake of breath, his heart drumming wildly. He remained calm, knowing that compared to the Red Death, the Skrill wouldn't be too much of an issue. "Come on, bud, we gotta' take it out a different way."

Toothless snorted and turned to speed away. The other dragon followed. Hiccup looked back to see its narrowed eyes shining through the night, haunting and striking. He turned back forward and looked for some way to get away from it. He looked down, seeing the masses of dragons and people tumbling about along the coast and through the village. The fire was like a vast ocean on land.

"Toothless, get over to that forest and under the treeline. We can lose it there," Hiccup ordered, seeing that the forest back behind Berk lay untouched for the time being.

Toothless plunged and, soon, they were under the thick canopy of leaves. The darkness veiled them. Toothless twisted and turned, ducked and spin, before stopping and landing, bounding into a clear area and hunkering down. The Skrill's shriek laced its way among the trees, but the creature was soon forced to give up. Once Hiccup heard the receding sound of wings, he released the breath he didn't know he had been holding.

Looking down at Toothless, who craned his head around to look up, Hiccup said, "Lets go back and take out that last catapult ship. Then we can keep the deal and find the others."

Toothless nodded and took back to the air. As they broke out through the trees, however, Hiccup felt like his eardrums bursted. Sound was all around him, and it punched him hard in the gut. He felt himself thrown with such a force that he was somehow detached from Toothless' saddle. He was floating for a moment and then flailing. The ground was rushing towards him.

He hit it full impact and he thought for sure his bones had shattered. He tumbled along the ground until his body rolled up against a tree where he came to a stop. Pain, agony, and misery swept through his entire being all at once. He reached out and pushed himself away from the tree, rolling over until he was lying on his left side. He checked to make sure he could feel all the body parts he was supposed to have. His right arm, left arm, head, torso, right leg, and left thigh. Everything responded to him, though with tendrils of ache.

Then he remembered Toothless. He managed to turn onto his stomach and was beginning to push himself up, his arms wobbling beneath him. His brain searched for the answer as to what had happened, but he wasn't sure.

Then an unbearable weight smashed onto his back and pushed him down. He crashed back onto the ground, sprawled out and shaking. His left cheek rested uncomfortably on top of a twig. The weight on his back didn't cease and he wondered if his spine was going to break. He heaved with the effort to keep breathing.

"What's the matter, Dragon Conquerer? Am I stepping on you too hard?" Alvin laughed, thrusting more weight onto Hiccup and shoving him harder into the ground.

Blood Cry came up behind Alvin, eyes glinting with victory.

\* \* \*

><p>YAY!</p>

...Wait...

xD

This is the part where you review and then go play Dreamworks Dragons: Wild Skies... So do it... Both of those things x3

Love,

Deyoxis

## 7. Meeting Fate

Holy, explosions.

Anyways, a LOT goes on in this chapter. And by a lot, I mean that time jumps around a bit... We'll be in the present time with one character and then with another we'll jump back. So just be aware that not all of these situations may be happening at the same time...

I also want to warn you that this chapter is exceedingly serious. It has, like, one happy moment, but the rest is sort of awful. So bear with me and please do not hate me x3

If you get confused, let me know in a review so I can clarify and/or edit the chapter some to make it more understandable (:

\*\*Chapter Seven: Meeting Fate

><strong>

>Astrid stopped at the top of the steps to the Great Hall. She waited as Fishlegs, Snotlout, Ruffnut, and Tuffnut came up alongside her. Just as she figured, Hiccup didn't seem to be coming. It irked her some, that she couldn't stay behind and fight while he could, but she had to let it go. Instead, she turned to the other teens and asked if they knew where their dragons had run off to.</p>

"Hookfang went off with some of the other Nightmares to be on strike duty. I bet he's with my dad," Snotlout tried.

Fishlegs nodded and said, "Meatlug may have gone to help load the catapults... if not fire her own rocks."

"Barf went to the docks to help kick some outcast butt," Tuffnut grinned.

"Belch went to spew his gas all over the incoming ships," Ruffnut put in.

Astrid couldn't believe how dumb the twins could be. For a moment, she could only stare at them with a gaze that clearly read she was confounded that they hadn't noticed their own mistake. Her mouth was slightly open and her blue eyes questioning. Luckily, the two quickly caught on to what she was gaping about and so Astrid didn't even have to voice it.

Tuffnut quickly saved them by admitting, "I don't know where he is."

"Me neither."

Astrid about smashed her forehead into her palm, but just shook her head at them all. She waved them all off to go find their dragons, ordering them to meet her back by the trail that Mulch, Bucket, and the others would take. They all fled down the steps, careful not to trip over themselves. Tuffnut and Snotlout seemed to be moving extra gently. Out of the six of them, they had seemed to take the hardest blows physically the past two days.

Fishlegs hadn't hardly even been touched when they were being held captive. Astrid wasn't sure why, probably because he had been sleeping or fainted the majority of the time. He hadn't once concerned Alvin in the least bit about fighting back... or even saying something. Although she knew he did have to massage the outcasts' leader's feet... That sounded enough like a horrid nightmare, one that she hadn't been around for because she and Ruffnut had been taken to the Dark Pit.

That's basically all the place was. That and it had a couple snakes slithering around in its inky blackness. Neither Astrid nor Ruffnut had gotten much sleep that night, taking turns letting one rest while the other listened to make sure no snakes approached them. Usually, one snake did, and a lot of kicking and scuffling of feet ensued, waking the resting female up. Even while Astrid was trying to relax, the soft hissing of the snakes rang in her head and made it nigh impossible to catch even the tiniest bit of dreams. The worst was how cold the place was. With no torches or lighting of any sort, heat didn't exist. Ruffnut and Astrid had clung to each other all night, savoring in each other's body heat and even standing up and jogging every once and a while to try and get the blood flowing. The two had always been a bit closer, being the two females of the group, but never had they imagined they would have to hug each other for long.

Snotlout wouldn't admit it, but it was easy to see the sickness in his eyes. He was woozy and probably had some sort of head injury beyond his cracked skull. The bandage was still wrapped tight around his head, dirtied from rain and blood. He shivered every once and a while and would tilt when just trying to stand still. Somehow, he managed to stay conscious and even acted relatively normal for him. He appeared pretty worn down, exhausted from when Alvin "practiced" sword-fighting on him and Tuffnut. Astrid was inwardly concerned for

him, but tried not to show it. He didn't seem to keen on being pitied, anyways.

Tuffnut was practically purple. His back, chest, arms, and legs were all slightly swollen, each shaded darker in certain spots where he had been struck the hardest. It didn't help that he still kept try to rustle with his sister every now and then, only inflaming the injuries more. Ruffnut could handle it. She only had a couple bruises and the long gash that sliced across her cheek. It was dried over with blood and, thankfully, didn't seem infected.

Aside from the extreme wariness that settled over her body, Astrid wasn't in too bad of shape. She gingerly touched her bruised eye. It was still tender and obviously a bit swollen, but not near as bad as when she had first been struck. The chill of the Dark Pit seemed to have helped eased it some, so it didn't feel quite as burning as before.

Coming to a halt, she watched as Snotlout, Fishlegs, and the twins each ran off in their own direction to fetch their dragons. The outcasts were nearly on Berk all ready. The hulking ships loomed closer and closer, the dragons flying over appeared much more deadly than Astrid had ever thought of a dragon before. Perhaps because now they had the aid of humans alongside them. The moon hung formidably in the sky. It was shining brightly, but Berk had never looked so dark to Astrid before. As she scanned her village, she couldn't help but feel that it wasn't going to so calm looking the next time she came back... or as in tact.

Pulling her fingers to her mouth, she used two to let out a long, piercing whistle. She hoped it was loud enough for Stormfly to recognize it from wherever she was. Astrid was in luck because she soon saw the blue glitter of her dragon's scales as the Nadder came floating down. Astrid greeted her joyfully, glad to know that Stormfly would be on their side.

Stormfly pulled her head away, looking up into the air as two more Nadders zoomed past overhead. The creatures veered off to join the Vikings that were going to fight from the air upon dragons. Stormfly hummed softly, seeming almost sad. Astrid watched the Nadders disappear from view before looking up at her dragon, feeling her heart swell with amazement.

"Stormfly! Were they two of your children? You got them to come help us?" the teen exclaimed.

Stormfly let out a couple quick chirps in what Astrid had come to know was the Nadder's way of agreeing. She smiled broadly and scratched her dragon under the chin, praising her. Sighing, she knew she needed to get to the trail if at least one of them was going to catch Mulch and Bucket and the others in time to let them know they had escorts. She hurriedly made her way to Stormfly's side and swung herself upon the female dragon's back, quickly informing her on where they needed to go.

The trail wasn't far off, so they were there in a flash. As Stormfly settled to the earth, Astrid spotted Mulch leading the others up to the wooded trail. She flung herself off Stormfly and jogged up to intercept them. She felt the slap of her braid on her back, but then noticed for the first time a jingling noise. She paused and looked

down at her wrist, recalling for the first time in a while that she still had the lock and part of the chain from the dungeon on her wrist. She'd have to remember to get that removed soon. For now, she wrapped the chain around her wrist twice and then tucked it in itself to try and keep it from dangling about. She then approached Mulch.

"Snotlout, the twins, Fishlegs, and I are going to protect you all on your journey and when you reach a safe spot," she informed him.

Mulch nodded, motioning for the group to stop. Astrid looked out to see the children gathered in a small group. Only two pregnant women had come, one who was heavily pregnant, clutching her stomach in fear while the other wasn't quite so far along. The elders, including Mildew and Gothi, were closer to the back where Bucket stood behind them, taking up the rear of the group. Mildew was muttering bitterly, probably something along the lines of how all of this was Hiccup's fault or the dragons' fault. Astrid didn't really care to hear his whining.

At the sound of wings, Astrid looked up to see the arrival of a Nightmare and Gronckle. It didn't surprise her to not see the twins, yet. They would take another minute to find their two headed troublemaker. The two creatures landed not far off. Fishlegs and Snotlout awaited orders.

"Fishlegs, you and Meatlug walk with Mulch at the front. Snotlout, take Hookfang and watch the path ahead from the sky. I'll walk in the back with Stormfly and the twins will cover the rear from the air when they get here," Astrid decided, nodding her head as she addressed them.

Fishlegs slid off of Meatlug and the two made their way up to flank Mulch. Hookfang spread his wings and, on a downbeat, was soon circling above them.

"Mulch, go ahead and start off. I'll wait for Ruffnut and Tuffnut. We'll catch up to you all."

Mulch nodded his head. "Sounds good, missy. Be careful back there... Mildew's spewing up more acid than a Changewing."

Astrid winced at the thought. She had forgotten she'd be back by Mildew by covering the rear. Poor decision on her part, but she knew she could handle the jerk of an old man. She stepped to the side as Mulch passed with Fishlegs and Meatlug. The children scurried along, a couple clutching some Terrible Terrors close to their chests. The women passed next, their eyes watching the kids in front of them to make sure none strayed from the path. As Mildew came up, he shot a look of venom at Astrid.

"Look what your pal Hiccup has done. Because of him and his dragons, Berk is going to be destroyed!"

Astrid's fists clenched and she stepped up to the man, eyes narrowed. Rage churned in her head and stomach as she looked at the spiteful elder. She wanted nothing more than to drag him back to Berk and let one of Alvin's dragons gobble him up as a snack.

"Alvin would attack Berk with dragons or without them. There was no stopping him."

Mildew laughed dryly, his arms clutching his sheep almost as close as the children clutched their Terrors. "But he has dragons now, doesn't he? And whose fault is it, hm?"

Astrid was about to deliver a blow to Mildew's gut when Bucket reached out, grabbed the old man, and started dragging him along. A couple of the other elders chuckled mildly, loping on down the trail and casting wary glances back at Mildew. Even Gothi seemed to smile faintly at Mildew's angry cries for being torn away from his verbal argument.

Bucket shook his head. "Hush now, Mildew. We gots to catch up to the others so we isn't left behind. Keep moving."

"Unhand me, you oaf!"

Bucket ignored him much to Astrid's delight. She watched as the group soon sunk into the forest, hidden amongst the trees. She looked over at Stormfly, who clucked, cocking her head, then looking to the sky. The Nadder's eyes narrowed as she searched for her Zippelback friend.

\* \* \*

><p>"Way to go! Because of you we lost our dragon!" Tuffnut declared.</p>

Ruffnut fumed. "Because of me? I wasn't the one who left him to go do whatever he felt like."

Tuffnut snorted, considering starting another fight with his fists. His aching body felt like it had been struck by lightning, however, so he came to the conclusion that it wasn't his brightest idea. Not that he had many bright ideas to begin with. He left the smart things to Astrid, Fishlegs, and Hiccup. He lived for the moment with his sister and Snotlout.

"Well, do you know where to look? I don't know where to look," he finally relinquished.

The two strolled out along the docks. Men and women were all around them, gearing up and shouting orders. The two teens were shoved constantly and many of the Vikings demanded to know what they were doing. The twins were hasty to fire back that they were only looking for their dragon. They began to ask the people surrounding them if any of them had seen Barfbelch, but no one had been paying attention to the allied dragons. Only the enemy ones that were almost in shooting range.

"This is getting dumb, he's probably not even down here," Ruffnut scowled, kicking at the wooden planks beneath her feet.

Tuffnut was getting annoyed. "Damn it, where is he?"

Sven approached at that moment, looking flustered. He glanced back over to one of the boats, pointing, "What is your dragon doing?"

Tuffnut and his sister faced the direction he was pointing and saw their Zippelback sitting on one of Berk's ships, roaring into the distance towards the oncoming enemy fleet. Their mouths were open, sharp teeth glinting and yellow eyes narrowed to slits, their pupils dark and burning. They flung their heads about, screeching wildly, clearly ready to fight.

"Barfbelch," Ruffnut called and burst into a heavy sprint towards the ship.

Tuffnut stood in the same spot for a couple seconds before realizing he should probably go help. He pounded after his sister, legs crying out with pain and nearly giving out beneath him a couple times. He turned out onto the pier that the ship was docked to and came up alongside Ruffnut, motioning the Zippelback to come out of the boat. The dragon turned and looked, its heavy body rocking the floating mass heavily, waves spewing along the docks as it blinked at them with surprise.

Belch, being closest to them, leaned his head over to Ruffnut, who was his rider. Tuffnut's sister explained hurriedly, "We need you guys. We're in charge of protecting the children and elderly."

Barf looked over and roared slightly, seeming displeased at the news.

"We agree, guys. We want to fight here, too, but someone's gotta' protect those other people," Tuffnut said.

Barf and Belch exchanged a long, hard glance. After a moment, their gazes softened and they turned, seeming to finally understand what Ruff and Tuff were trying to tell them. Giving in, they lowered themselves so that the twins could climb on. Ruffnut practically leapt on while Tuffnut took it gently, relieved to be in the air and not running around any more. It was about time to spare his legs.

The Zippelback took to the sky, zipping about in its dashing way. Tuffnut tried to take charge but Ruffnut began to shout orders over him. Barf and Belch let out moans of frustration and so Tuffnut just gave in. He had never felt so tired before. He never gave into his sister like that. She looked at him quizzically, cocking her head to the side, braids flying out behind her like banners in the wind. Tuffnut just shrugged and glanced over his arms, the purple hue looking even more discolored in the poor lighting of the night.

When they reached the trail, Astrid and Stormfly were waiting, both looking impatient. Barfbelch landed on the ground, the jolt of hitting a solid shaking Tuffnut's bones and nearly making him groan as a dull ache pressed through his body.

"What took you guys so long?" Astrid demanded.

Ruffnut sighed. "Look, we're here now, aren't we?"

At that moment, the world behind them burst into wails of agony and war. Tuffnut and Ruffnut faced forward to the forest, knowing they couldn't see what exactly was occurring behind them. They did know, however, that the battle had begun and it all ready didn't sound too

pretty. Tuffnut just stared at Astrid. "Well, what do you want us to do, oh supreme ruler?"

Astrid grunted and shook her head at them. "The others are all ready up ahead. Can you guys watch the rear from the air? Stormfly and I are going to cover the rear from the ground while Fishlegs and Snotlout are holding the front."

"That's my specialty," Ruffnut declared, though both Astrid and Tuffnut both knew it wasn't.

It was clearly his. "Is not."

"Is too," Ruffnut spat back, looking over at him with fire in her eyes. The gash on her cheek made her look extra serious.

"Just get going," Astrid screamed up at them.

Barfbelch rose to the air before Ruffnut and Tuffnut even had time to gather themselves. Both of the teens fell forward, faces and chests coming down hard against the back of their dragons skulls. Ruffnut yelped while Tuffnut just felt like he took a couple punches to the face. His world spun, but his hands quickly sought out Barf's horns and curled his finger around them. His knuckles turned white as he struggled to hold on, legs crossing beneath him around his dragon's slender neck. The Zippelback dashed through the air while Ruffnut gazed over, looking down through the trees along the path to locate the people they were supposed to be watching.

She pointed, "There they are."

Barfbelch slowed. They began to circle, bright eyes keeping a look out. Each head hissed, the sound low and deadly. Tuffnut and Ruffnut craned their heads about, unsure of what exactly they might see. Tuffnut felt a tendril of panic rise in his chest when he heard shrieks of dragons and people rise up in a sudden chorus from near Berk. Then he realized it sounded like cheering. A scream suddenly broke through the thin air and he glanced over at his sister, who smirked. It was Toothless. The Night Fury was doing something.

For what felt like forever, they continued to just hover along. Tuffnut constantly checked below them to make sure they still had an eye on the glistening scales of Stormfly, who was easily visible through the trees. Up ahead they could make out the form of Hookfang and Snotlout. The Nightmare was sailing steadily along, powerful body moving a bazillion times smoother than Barfbelch's random jerking.

Thunder echoed above the fading sounds of the roar back near the village. It sounded close and it sounded angry. Tuffnut tossed his head to look above him, but saw the sea of stars stretching over them like a thin blanket. There was no storm around so it had to have been a dragon. A Thunderdrum.

Astrid and Stormfly were in the air alongside them at that moment. The Nadder was hovering and so Barfbelch stopped and waited, seeing that the blonde was going to say something.

"Whatever you're doing, we're coming too," Ruffnut said before Astrid could even speak.

Astrid's blue gaze found the other female. She seemed concerned about something. "Fine, but let me go let Snotlout know what we're doing before we go."

"What are we doing?" Tuffnut asked as Stormfly swooped up toward the Nightmare.

Ruffnut shrugged.

As Stormfly came back, Astrid barely glanced at the twins. She was holding onto Stormfly's reins with a powerful grip, her body hunched to brace against Stormfly's speed. Her eyes were locked on something in the distance and her voice was tense as she shouted to them, "Let's go!"

Tuffnut and Ruffnut nodded and stiffened as Barfbelch beat after the Nadder.

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><p>Stoick saw another of Alvin's ships become enveloped in blue flames. It was the fourth one Toothless managed to strike. The Viking chief grinned in triumph while Thornado's muscles rippled beneath him, releasing another bone-shattering screech. The opponent targeted spun to the right. It was the Whispering Death and it was proving to be difficult to hit.</p>

The outcast aboard the monster's back, Savage, howled loudly with a victorious laughter and the dragon he rode plunged forward. The Whispering Death had no legs, so as it neared, its mouth parted, the rows of teeth spinning about, intent on taking a bite out of Thornado.

"Look out!" Stoick cried and Thornado dove down, spinning belly-up and skimming the underside of the Whispering Death's body as it soared past.

Stoick held tight to the reins, pulling his body as close as he could to avoid dangling or plummeting as his dragon was momentarily upside down. As soon as the creature had past, Thornado was right side up and peering at it with a furious gaze. Stoick roared with his own hatred, feeling Thornado swell again beneath him. His reached out, placing a hand along the top of his Thunderdrum's head and ordering him to wait. Not yet.

Stoick's gaze remained steady on the Whispering Death. He stroked Thornado's blue scales, urging his dragon to hold it until the opportune moment. Thornado obeyed, luckily, surprising since the dragon liked to take to doing things his own way a majority of the time. That's what Stoick liked about his dragon. It was a leader, feisty and cunning. Now, at least, it was learning to listen.

Savage steered his terrible beast forward. Stoick stopped his patting, whispering steady under his breath. He drowned out the sounds of the fights raging on around them. He ignored the clash of metal on metal. He ignored the pained cry of a Nadder as it was hit by Alvin's remaining catapult. He ignored the bellowing shriek of the Whispering Death as it neared him, mouth gaping with an eager hunger. He ignored the wicked laugh that escaped Savage's throat. He only

watched the eyes. The Whispering Death's bulging white bumps weren't even visible as it approached. As it lowered its head, revealing the pearls for eyes and about to swallow Thornado and Stoick, the chief order his dragon to release.

The sound that Thornado unleashed had been building up in his throat the whole time. As it came pouring out in a rush, it was filled with more power than Stoick had thought possible. Thor had certainly blessed his dragon with a tremendous honor at that moment. So near to the Whispering Death, the creature couldn't dodge and it took the impact like a crushing blow. Its teeth split, cracking and chipping, and some even ripped right out, flying through into the creature's throat. It was tossed back, taken off guard and knocked out. Savage was torn away from the blast. The man and beast fell, their bodies breaking through the roof of a burning house. The smell of burning flesh rose up in waves from the place.

Thornado cried out in agony at that moment. Stoick craned his head around to see two Deadly Nadder spines sticking into his dragon's tail. He bellowed with anger, ripping them out quickly to prevent too much of the venom from slipping into Thornado's body. The Thunderdrum staggered, though, clearly having received just enough to stun him.

"Thornado, take a landing. I'll protect you as you recover," he quickly cried out.

The dragon was quick to obey. Unable to fly properly, he flitted about with tossing movements, descending rapidly. He pulled up at the last second before coming down hard on the earth, a cry of distress leaving his huge mouth. Stoick pushed himself off and groped for his sword handle. He yanked the weapon out, the steel whirring in the air as he turned to dare face anyone who tried to come at him or Thornado.

He heard the tremendous thump of another dragon landing nearby and he wheeled around to see Gobber and the Bone Knapper just a couple feet away. Gobber dashed up as well as he could while the Bone Knapper moved to stand over Thornado. His boned tail thrashed about and his jaw parted, ready to release some fire upon anyone who dared approach.

Gobber grinned. "Thought you two could use a hand."

"Thanks, Gobber. Thornado will be stunned for a bit, I appreciate it."

"Any time."

Stoick heard the call of a man running at him. He turned and readied his sword, Gobber coming alongside him. The outcast didn't stand a chance against the two men, who easily brought him to his knees. While Stoick was normally not one to go for the killing blow against a man brought down, the outcast swiped out with a dagger he yanked from his belt. Unfortunately for him, the only thing he hit was Gobber's peg leg, resulting in not even a cry of pain.

Seething with fury that the outcast would try to deliver such a low blow when clearly beaten, Stoick drove his sword forward, pushing it through the chest of the man. Blood seeped out in a gush and the

light in the outcast's eyes fled in an instant. Removing his sword from the body, Stoick watched the body fall over, slumping to the ground and crimson liquid pooling about. Stoick sneered, looking up to see another hoard of outcasts heading towards them.

The Bone Knapper unleashed his cry, halting the men in their tracks as they braced themselves against the onslaught of power. As they moved to recover, the Bone Knapper's fire shot out, engulfing them in a blaze. The men screamed with surprise, watching their bodies burn before their very eyes. One stumbled and ran, trying to flee, his body alight with flickering flames. He couldn't see and tumbled over the edge of one of Berk's many cliffs, the light of his body fading from view.

"Alvin is outnumbered, his men are slowly falling. Surly he will be turning back any moment now," Gobber declared.

Stoick's green eyes found his friend. "Are you sure?"

"Not entirely, actually. When it comes to the air battles, we seem to be winning. I don't know how we're doing by the docks."

"Not good," Stoick sighed.

"What makes you say that?"

"All those men that broke through. We're up in the main part of the village, Gobber. If they made it up here, I don't know if things are going well on the docks."

Gobber mused over this thought before frowning with concern. His face was etched with worry.

Stoick headed past the smoldering bodies of the men that were just defeated and headed to the edge of the cliff to look out over to the docks. It was a bloody mess. Dragons overhead still roared and spat. Berk's remaining catapults were trying vainly to pick out the dragons of Alvin's side and hit them, but it was near impossible to see the difference from the ground in the darkness of the night. The dim lighting around the docks made it difficult to see who may be winning. Only the blazing fires that raced through the village seemed to be real, so bright and hot that their existence couldn't be denied. The rest of the world looked almost surreal.

"My people are dying," Stoick sighed, wondering just how many of his villagers were lost.

Gobber came alongside him. "You don't know that."

The outcasts' lone catapult fired. Stoick watched the rock shoot over their heads towards Thornado and the Bone Knapper. He wheeled around, his heart catching in surprise. The Bone Knapper was ready, however, and flung its body around, using his tail to knock the incoming projectile aside.

Stoick was then panicked. He turned to Gobber, eyes wide.

"What is it, Stoick?"

"Hiccup was supposed to finish off all of Alvin's catapults. If

there's one more left, where is he?"

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><p>Hiccup felt his back cracking under the weight. He could hardly move, the pressure becoming too much to bear. His spine was going to snap and he would be crushed. He gasped for breath, his chest and stomach pushed so hard against the ground that it was becoming increasingly difficult to fill his lungs with much needed air. His hands groped along the ground, scratching at it, clawing desperately for any possible item that could be of use to him. Nothing was located, however, so he merely continued to struggle.</p>

"Why, this is a sight to see. The Dragon Conquerer flailing along the ground. I bet it'll just break Stoick's heart when I go back into Berk holding your head up for all to see."

The wicked voice of Alvin drummed through Hiccup's head with an intensity that it made his skull feel like it would crack. The man was laughing now, reaching for the sword along his belt. Hiccup's face was practically flat on his cheek, giving him just enough of a view to see Alvin's hand wrap around the hilt and began to pull. It seemed a turtle-pace to Hiccup, who at that moment just wanted Alvin to either get on with it or be struck down right then and there. Anger coursed through his body and he prayed to Odin that Toothless was at least safe.

As Alvin was about to unsheathe the weapon fully, something smashed into him. A dark form. It barreled him over before pinning him down. Hiccup could hear Toothless snarling with anger. He didn't need to be seeing the scene to know it was the exact same way Toothless had taken down his father back in the ring all that time ago after having just saved Hiccup from a Nightmare. Toothless had been stopped from killing Stoick then because Hiccup had cried out for him not to. Here, though, Hiccup was more than ready to let his dragon blast off Alvin's face.

Blood Cry was not.

The crimson Thunderdrum charged Toothless. The Night Fury saw the incoming danger. He didn't have time to unleash his blast before he was forced to leap away, avoiding the sharp fangs of Blood Cry and sucking back in his fire. The dark dragon hissed with fury, claws digging into the ground and teeth out, gleaming dangerously. His pupils were narrowed to the tiniest of slivers, nearly lost in the depths of the green gaze.

Alvin stood, returning the same look Toothless was giving him.

Hiccup, meanwhile, tried to pull his arms beneath him and push himself up. His whole back felt like it had caved in and shivers ran up and down his spine, causing him to panic that it may be broken. He fought against the pain, however, and managed to arch it, allowing himself to sit up, though a bit unsteady. He groaned from the agony that laced along his back.

Toothless maneuvered around so that he was standing in front of Hiccup. Alvin and Blood Cry watched, vengeance dancing in their eyes. Alvin snorted and Blood Cry took that as his cue. He exploded with

sound in Toothless and Hiccup's direction. Toothless wheeled around and dove towards Hiccup, knowing his human and best friend was unable to dodge at that time. His arms outstretched and pulled Hiccup close to him. He did the same thing much like he did to protect Hiccup's body from the blaze of the Red Death's demise, wrapping his wings around him and curling up as best he could.

Hiccup couldn't see as he was pulled against Toothless. He felt his weak body enveloped and he shut his eyes tight, waiting for the sound to hit them. He felt Toothless' body get tossed, rolling along the ground from the blow. The Night Fury was thrown against a tree before falling into a heap at its base. Toothless slumped, his grip loosening and Hiccup was able to look up at his best friends face.

"No, bud, stay with me!" he cried, noticing Toothless' eyes started to droop.

The dragon struggled to stay conscious. Blood Cry released another deafening roar at that moment. With Toothless' hold slackened, Hiccup felt a part of the force slam into his back and shoved him into the chest of his best friend. The Night Fury was slammed back again, harder, as Blood Cry had moved dangerously close. Toothless, this time, fell into darkness, leaving Hiccup alone.

Hiccup couldn't hear. The Thunderdrum's last blast temporarily rattled his eardrums. Hiccup felt his body heaving with breaths, watching as Toothless sunk unconscious. Hiccup's mouth opened in a cry, shrieking out his friend's name, but hearing nothing. He placed a hand on Toothless' chest, searching to prove that his friend was still alive. He felt a steady rise and fall and was relieved to know that his Night Fury was only knocked out. His relief didn't last more than a second, though.

He rolled over somehow, still wrapped in Toothless' arms. He saw Blood Cry standing there, eyes brimming with accomplishment. The dragon's grin made Hiccup sick and furious. He pulled himself out of Toothless' arms and stood before his enemy, watching them. Alvin's mouth was moving, but Hiccup still couldn't hear. He just focused on standing, though his legs trembled beneath him and his back wanted to give out.

He saw steel glint in the moonlight as Alvin came running forward, sword raised. Hiccup didn't move, knowing that he would die before he left Toothless. He grimaced, looking death in the dark eyes of Alvin. The horrid smirk, the shining metal of the weapon. The man was almost upon him, but Hiccup merely drew in what he expected to be his last breath.

Then he saw a Nadder head-but Alvin away. Green smoke was shot at Blood Cry, who screeched in panic and dashed away before it exploded. The explosion sent a burst through the air and Hiccup stumbled back. It seemed to knock his head right and sound came flooding through his entire being, beating at him from every direction. Alvin's yells and the hissing of dragons.

"Hiccup!" Astrid's scream broke through and he blinked, his vision having gone fuzzy.

The girl was before him in an instant, hands on his shoulders as she

shook him gently to arouse his attention. Her blue eyes searched his, hoping to see a form of recognition. Eventually, she saw the spark in his eyes and knew that he was okay.

He stood up, but turned and rushed to Toothless' side. "Keep after Alvin and his dragon. I gotta' wake up Toothless."

Astrid nodded and ran back to Stormfly, only to stop as she reached her dragon's side. Alvin had thrown himself onto Blood Cry's back and they were rising to the air. Barfbelch started after him, but the Thunderdrum unleashed an attack at him, distracting the Zippelback just enough so that he could turn and vanish into the air back towards Berk. The frustration the outcast felt was clear from the last look on Alvin's face. He called into the air, vowing that he would kill Hiccup before the battle was over.

Barfbelch landed on the ground, allowing Tuffnut and Ruffnut to hop off and run up beside Hiccup. Astrid joined, as well, and the four leaned over the Night Fury, calling out his name desperately. Hiccup stroke Toothless' nose, feeling the breath of his dragon on his chest as he pulled Toothless' head into an embrace. "Toothless, please wake up."

He heard a soft moan and released his dragon's head. The Night Fury's eyes blinked over and over, seeming confused and uncertain. The fog in the dragon's head cleared as his looked at his best friend, however, and he then tossed his neck about to see the others gathered around. When he looked back to Hiccup, the boy scratched his head, smiling almost sullenly.

"You saved me, bud," he breathed, knowing that Blood Cry's roar would have probably killed him from that range if Toothless had not wrapped him up in his arms.

Toothless crooned softly, pushing to his feet and thrusting his head forward, nudging Hiccup with joy just to know that he was all right. Hiccup beamed, nearly forgetting about the war that was going on, just overjoyed to see that his dragon was okay. He sighed, coming back to reality as he heard the roar of a dragon in the distance.

Astrid stiffened while the twins suddenly seemed ill.

"What is it?" Hiccup asked, looking over.

Astrid looked out into the forest. "That dragon roar. It didn't come from the village, it came from out there."

"Sounded like Hookfang," Tuffnut remarked.

"Why would Hookfang be roaring? He's not in the battle," Ruffnut questioned no one.

The answer was clear.

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><p>Snotlout normally would have insisted that he join Astrid, but he knew that he couldn't do that right now. He could hardly concentrate on just keeping a lookout because his skull felt like it had split in

two and then been jammed back together harder than Stoick could swing a hammer. He watched her go, her blurry form vanishing in the night with Ruffnut and Tuffnut on Barfbelch. He looked back forward, clinging to Hookfang's horns with a sigh.<p>

Looking down, it was pretty easy to spot Meatlug lumbering about alongside Fishlegs and Mulch. The children kept close followed by the two women. The elders were a bit of a ways back, but still in sight, Bucket ushering them along as fast as he could get them to go.

The sounds of Berk were growing dim. The night enveloped them in its cold hug, the silence slowly draping them. It made Snotlout uneasy. Even with the calm, his head wasn't getting any better. He shivered, stomach churning. He swallowed the vomit that threatened to crawl up his throat, then shuttered from the taste. His mouth had bile along every edge of it despite constantly spitting some out.

Hookfang growled softly, seeming concerned for his rider, though he normally seem oblivious to Snotlout.

"It's okay, Hookfang," Snotlout lied. "We're almost there."

Hookfang didn't seem to like Snotlout's answer. His neck rippled with anxiety. It only increased in strength when he heard something approaching. His head jerked up, catching Snotlout off guard who cried out in alarm. The Nightmare craned around and peered through the darkness. Something was coming. Snotlout leaned forward, trying to see what it was. Flapping of wings was audible through the quietness of the air.

Then the form lit up, sparkling with energy.

Snotlout's eyes widened. "A Skrill! Fishlegs, get everyone going, there's a Skrill headed this way!"

Snotlout was gazing down, watching as Fishlegs ushered Mulch, the children, women, elders, and Bucket to get going. They all broke out into a run, even the old men and women. Mildew glanced up and let out a shriek before barreling after the others with a speed no one knew he was capable of. Bucket lifted up Gothi before charging through the forest.

"Go with them, Legs! I got this beast!"

"But, Snotlout-"

"Go!"

Snotlout turned. The Skrill was closer now and Snotlout felt his hair standing on end. He ignored the screaming in his brain and body, shifting his weight on Hookfang's back as they prepared to fight. He tensed and then they dodged left as white fire danced through the air where they just were. The Nightmare shot under the Skrill, then came up behind it, trying to keep pace with its powerful movements.

Snotlout shouted, "Get him!"

Hookfang unleashed a spitting rage of fire. The hot, sticky looking substance flew through the air before catching the Skrill's right

wing. To Snotlout's dismay, the creature didn't seem too affected by it though it did singe him. The Skrill roared, halting in the air at that moment and turning to face the Nightmare. Hookfang had no time to react and slammed into the other dragon, digging the claws of his wings into the Skrill's chest. A snarl of pain emitted from the Skrill's throat, but then it leaned forward, sinking its teeth into Hookfang's neck.

Snotlout's dragon let out a loud cry, piercing the air.

At the impact, Snotlout had lost his grip with one hand and was now dangling. But the dragons were falling. The Skrill was too focused on biting Hookfang and the Nightmare couldn't use its wings with its claws stuck in his opponents scaly skin. The air rushed by at such a rate that Snotlout was forced to release his other hand. He watched the dragons falling before him, Hookfang's neck gushing crimson.

Snotlout felt the agony, the pain, the dread, the misery, and the terror all at once. Hookfang was sorely injured. His dragon was beneath the Skrill as the two creatures plunged through the tree line and smashed into the ground. Snotlout himself was free falling, grabbing at air with no way of slowing down. His headache was unbearable and he could hardly feel his limbs. He knew he couldn't survive the fall, not at the speeds he was going. And Hookfang...

Snotlout would have never admitted it, not even then, falling to earth, but tears were fleeing his eyes as he prepared to meet his fate.

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><p>I'm going to let you guys know now that someone will die. I wasn't originally planning on it, but last chapter it just sort of hit me... Someone's going to go.</p>

This just goes to show how spontaneous my writing can be. I come in with an idea and a direction of what I want to happen and all, but then things can sometimes swing themselves another way.

I hope no one hates me for being really dark all of a sudden and that it is actually interesting.

But I really want to know your thoughts so please review. Just... don't bash me to death of anything x3 If you're unhappy with anything, just politely let me know and maybe I can find a way to make everyone (all six of you faithful readers, haha) happy, sound good?

With much love,

Deyoxis

## 8. It Ends Here

I edited some things in that last chapter... Grammatical errors and typos. Sheesh, I had a bunch. That's what happens when I type waaaayyy too fast for my brain and then I read over too fast for...

my brain... My poor brain, haha. I still probably missed some, though... Meh. I think I got the worst ones.

All right. Here's a look at what's coming.

Death. Yes, it will happen. This is a war story and... well, I've been letting (and will be letting) a lot of people get lucky so far in surviving. However, I think you guys will be surprised by who it is I have in mind. It will be sad, yes, but not quite as depressing as if I had chosen one of the initial characters I had in mind to die.

Pretty much I sat down and jotted down as many ideas that I could. You see, I wanted there to always be a second battle. But a lot of what that second battle is will depend on how the first battle goes. So I went ahead and I've outlined the rest of the first battle, which will last two more chapters (this and the next) and then we will have a "break" before the next battle. There will also be a lot of explaining as I'm going to explore the idea I came up with for Alvin's backstory as well as some other characters. Pretty much, I'm taking this story and expanding it from the original idea I had. It's so much more... in depth now. But I feel it will make it way more interesting... and longer... This story sure did change from the idea I began with in the first chapter.

Because of the changes, don't be surprised if the story summary changes soon to encompass more of what is going to happen.

They're only halfway through the war so don't start looking for sunshine and rainbows until at least partway through the second battle xD

Thank you for all sticking with me and keep those reviews up! You're all wonderful people!

A special shout out to my most loyal reviewers: \*\*just me\*\*, \*\*KaliAnn\*\*, \*\*Peachmikey11\*\*, \*\*Nadderwolf\*\*, \*\*Shur'turgal Daughter of Artemis\*\*, \*\*storygirl99210\*\*, and \*\*Anony mouse101. And to my new watchers and reviewers, I thank you for your new support (:\*\*

Now then.

\*\*Chapter Eight: It Ends Here\*\*

Falling wasn't exactly peaceful. Not to Snotlout. Between the swooshing of the wind that whipped past him, the screaming of his dragon below, and the pounding headache that threatened to split his skull, he could have thought of more relaxing things. His eyes were burning from the icy wind, so he squeezed them shut, tears escaping and sliding off of his face into the air. He was ready for the impact with the ground. It would be happening any second now.

The collision he felt was certainly with something solid, but it couldn't have been the earth. For one, it came wrapping around him from the side. It felt rough and bumpy. Uncomfortable. Yet safe.

Opening his eyes, he found himself looking at the belly of Meatlug. The Gronckle purred with amusement at the stunned look on Snotlout's face.

Eventually, Snotlout found himself with his back lying on the ground. The grass had never felt so good. It was cold, tickling his neck and arms. He wanted to lay there forever, but knew Hookfang needed him. He struggled to move but everything hurt and he could no longer register feeling in his limbs. Meatlug had landed nearby and so Fishlegs jumped off of her and scuttled over. He knelt down beside Snotlout, who groaned.

"Are you okay, Snotlout? Oh, gosh, Meatlug didn't hurt you did she?"

"No," Snotlout slurred. "She saved me. Thank her for me. I just can't move."

Fishleg's face dawned a look of worry. "Well, you were free falling for a couple seconds. I bet the wind was freezing. Plus, you look a little sick and... Were you crying?"

"No, the wind was just painful."

Fishlegs ignored Snotlout's lie. He walked around behind the fallen boy and placed his hands under his arms. Hoisting him up, much to Snotlout's surprise, Fishlegs tried to help steady him on his feet but Snotlout wobbled too much. So Fishlegs settled on just holding him, trying to be careful so as to not injure him. Suddenly, Snotlout jerked from his grip and nearly went crashing. Fishlegs snatched his shirt and pulled him back in, righting him.

"Hookfang! Where is he? I don't hear him or the Skrill!" Snotlout cried into the quietness of the air.

Fishlegs felt his forehead breaking out into a cold sweat. He bit his bottom lip, looking over at his dragon. The Gronckle whined softly, showing an unease at going out to fight. Fishlegs couldn't bring himself to make his dragon go but he knew that Hookfang probably needed assistance. He strained to hear the sound of the Nightmare and Skrill through the trees but no noise came through. Only the soft weeping of the wind laced through the trees.

Snotlout was struggling. Fishlegs had never seen the usually tough, snappy boy so broken down as he fought to go find his dragon. The clawing of Snotlout's hands could have hardly injured a baby. Fishlegs shook him lightly, though Snotlout reacted like he had just gone through a hurricane.

"Calm down, Snotlout. Meatlug and I will go find him. You need to stay here and be safe," Fishlegs chided, slowly setting Snotlout back down as he reached a decision.

Snotlout cried out angrily as Fishlegs jogged back over to Meatlug and climbed onto her back. They were about to launch in the air when the world above them danced with electricity. The Skrill was flying up, its body crackling. It screamed into the sky, rearing its head up to look to the stars. Its mouth gaped open as it yelled, saliva sliding from its fangs, clear in a light of the moon. It hovered, looking down at a spot on the ground. Its mouth opened wider and it took an intake of breath before unleashing it in a blinding hot, white fire. A cry of surprise split the air and the two boys knew instantly that it was Hookfang.

Snotlout seemed to find renewed strength. Breaking through the numbness that gripped his limbs, he managed to push himself to his feet after a couple tries. "I'm coming, Hookfang!"

"Snotlout wait!"

Snotlout didn't listen. Once he managed to get his legs pumping forward, he broke into a run, heading straight towards the glow of fire. The forest was blazing, bursting into smoke. Snotlout found himself inhaling the thick substance, scratching his throat. His eyes watered up and he hacked with an effort to breath as he pushed through. He stumbled, nearly crashing, but pressed onward. He couldn't even think between the pain that engulfed him. He only knew he had to find Hookfang.

There!

The Nightmare was curled up on the ground, coated in a layer of ash and dirt. Blood was sliding amongst his scales around his neck and dripping to a puddle on the ground. His eyes were closed, but the shutter of his chest proved he was still breathing. Snotlout approached him, bile rising in his throat at the state he saw his dragon in. He reached Hookfang and fell to his knees, wrapping his arms around the Nightmare's neck and inspecting the wound. Thankfully, it didn't seem to deep. A gash that slid across the tender underside of the neck. If anything, Hookfang was tired from the blood loss and the plummet through the trees. Snotlout couldn't help but feel relief for a moment.

The cracking of limbs and the roar of the fire reminded him of the situation he was in. The forest had become hot. Used to the cold, the sudden circle of heat around Snotlout felt like too much. The metal lock and chain still on his wrist from the dungeon began to increase in temperature as the fire swept around them. Sweat broke out and his fever only felt worse. Snotlout forced himself to ignore it, though it caused his limbs to shake. His eyes were blurry from smoke. They stung like needles were poking through.

Falling to his knees and hands, he managed to crawl over to Hookfang's face. He reached up, placing a hand on his dragon's snout. He could barely make out anything as the air only seemed to increase in thickness. He choked for clean oxygen.

"Hookfang," he stammered, trying to arouse the Nightmare.

A soft coo answered him and then yellow eyes were staring him down. Snotlout couldn't tell, though, forced to shut his eyes. He heard a strange noise followed by an explosion. The world seemed to tremble but then Snotlout passed out.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup saw that the war had spread. Now, even beyond the outskirts of the village, the forest blazed up in a fiery fuel. Above it, the Skrill he and Toothless had escaped earlier beat its wings, examining its handiwork from the sky. The creature seemed to be smiling, face eerie through the fiery haze.</p>

"Astrid—" Hiccup started, but was cut off.

"I know, I know. We'll go find Snotlout, Fishlegs, and the others. Be careful with that dragon!"

This time, it actually was the dragon that Hiccup was worried about.

He watched as the Nadder and Zippieback behind him flew down to skim the trees, hoping to find those they were searching for. Hiccup then returned his attention to the Skrill. The beast was so infatuated with what he had done that he didn't even blink in Toothless' direction. Hiccup gripped the handle of his saddle tighter, fists clutching desperately as he readied himself for the Night Fury's speed. He flicked his prosthetic, allowing Toothless to begin a small dive towards the Skrill. Toothless unleashed his shriek before sending a fireball of blue into the creature. The explosion rocked the air, causing the smoke that was curling around the Skrill to shoot away, pushed back by the rush.

The Skrill was knocked to the right. It flipped, regaining its composure and spun around to try and lock onto its opponent.

Toothless dove into some smoke to hide from view. Hiccup had to shut his eyes and hold his breath, trusting his best friend to guide them through safely and hurriedly. Eventually, he felt fresh air swamp him as Toothless broke out from the smoke behind the Skrill and then crashed onto the creature, latching onto the Skrill's back.

The monster screeched in surprise, trying to continue to flap but finding it harder to stay airborne with a Night Fury on its back. It clawed at the air and tried to crane its head around in an attempt to bite out at Toothless. It couldn't reach, however, and felt itself faltering as it began to fall.

Toothless' wings stretched out and he used them to control the speed and direction of the plunge. He pulled the Skrill close to him, using the other dragon as a shield as they broke through the burning trees. Hiccup felt a blast of heat consume him as they went down. He was jolted in his seat when they crashed, the Skrill's body taking the impact and Toothless still sitting safely on top.

The beast beneath them stirred, fighting at the ground with its clawed wings. Its tail snapped to and fro, whipping around, nearly taking off Hiccup's head. Hiccup pressed close to Toothless, tucking his body in so that his forehead rested against the leather saddle on Toothless' back. It was difficult to breath and he had to maintain his grip as the dragons beneath him thrashed about. He could feel their power with each movement and wondered how much longer Toothless was going to try and pin the other creature down.

Suddenly, Toothless' roar broke the air, penetrating over the sound of the raging fire. At that warning, the Skrill ceased its movements, becoming almost lifeless. Hiccup took the moment to peer over and see what was going on beneath. He saw Toothless' claws dug into the other dragon's scales, yet they weren't bleeding. His Night Fury hadn't gone for the kill, only to warn. As the Skrill stopped moving, Toothless slowly let off his hold. Hiccup could feel the rumbling of a low growl building in Toothless' chest as the Night Fury stepped off slowly, seeming to gauge whether the Skrill was deceiving him or not.

Toothless was cautious not to step out into the fire, not wanting to burn off his tail or injure Hiccup, who was all ready heaving for oxygen in the smoke. He cocked his head, looking back at Hiccup for a second and yipping softly to check and see if his friend was all right.

"I'll be fine for a little bit more, bud," Hiccup coughed.

Then the Skrill was back on the attack, having fooled Toothless into thinking that he wasn't going to be a threat any more just long enough to get Toothless to get off of him. The beast pulled its head back. Hiccup looked up to see sharpened teeth and a dark hole of a throat. The darkness began to vanish, however, as a billowy green gas began to makes its way up and expel through the mouth.

Hiccup's eyes widened. "Toothless!"

The Night Fury caught on quickly, jumping back. He shot with a ferocious speed, his blast sailing down into the Skrill's throat. The creature felt its internal body flare up and it bellowed in pain, black smoke now emitting from its jaws. It tossed about, trying to relieve itself of the sudden affliction. Toothless bared his teeth, ready to continue an onslaught when a whirring noise of incoming objects echoed through the air.

Poison spines now protruded from the Skrill's neck. The beast shook with frustration, dancing wildly about.

"Hiccup, come on!" Astrid called, her voice sounding raspy through the smoke.

Hiccup looked up to see her and Stormfly hovering not far above them, the Nadder having thrown the spikes down at the Skrill. Hiccup reached down and padded Toothless' neck. His dragon fled into the air up alongside his Nadder friend. Tuffnut and Ruffnut materialized through the smoke on Barfbelch. Belch unleashed as waterfall of gas down upon the Skrill. The beast was getting woozy from the poison, stumbling and tossing about as it tried to find a secure footing. It vanished under the gas and then Barf lit it while Toothless and Stormfly burst to get away from the scene.

The sound of the gas changing into fire was like one sharp thunder. The sound of the Skrill could be heard no more.

Toothless, Stormfly, and Barfbelch broke through the cloud of smoke. Their riders gulped down the fresh air and rubbed at their burning eyes, relieved for the break. As Hiccup sat up straight, stretched his back, he glanced over at Astrid and the twins questioningly. His throat burned from being inside the inferno and so he hoped just a look would get his question across.

Astrid caught on to his confusion, "We found Fishlegs pretty quickly. He helped us find Snotlout and Hookfang. They were both pretty beat up, those two, and Snotlout was unconscious. Stormfly and Barfbelch manages to carry Hookfang to where the children and elders and all are while Fishlegs took Snotlout. They're all waiting for us."

"Are Snotlout and Hookfang all right?" Hiccup asked once he found his voice, worry for his cousin pooling in his stomach.

"Hookfang's got a gash on his neck but he's still breathing," Tuffnut supplied.

Hiccup narrowed his eyes. "That doesn't mean Hookfang's fine. Is the gash bad?"

"We didn't really have time to examine it," Astrid broke in to keep Tuffnut from saying something potentially stupid.

Hiccup let the other two dragons lead. It wasn't far to where the people had fled, only able to get somewhere so fast on foot. They had found a path that led down from the upper areas down to one of the beaches on Berk. It didn't take Hiccup long to recognize it as the same beach where Alvin had docked a couple days ago to kidnap him and the other teens. Just the thought made his stomach churn.

As Toothless and the others settled to the ground, Hiccup flung himself off and struggled through the sand over to where Snotlout and Hookfang had been placed. The pregnant woman that wasn't so far along was cleaning up Hookfang's wound, using some cloth she had ripped from her tunic. Mildew had brought a water container along in case Fungus got thirsty and was now fuming about how the water was being used to wet the cloth to help a no-good dragon. Bucket and Mulch had ushered him away from the others where he could scream into the air with only Fungus there to pay attention.

Gothi was leaning over Snotlout, who had another piece of ripped cloth dampened with the water, stretched out across his forehead. She eyed him warily, watching his breathing before turning to look at Hiccup as he neared.

Hiccup bent down beside his cousin, looking him over. No signs of physical injury outside of his bandaged head. Still, Snotlout was shivering some, lost in blackness. Hiccup heard Hookfang groan softly and looked over, seeing that the dragon wasn't complaining about his wound, but looking at Hiccup, as if waiting or confirmation that his owner would be okay.

Gothi was writing in the sand.

Mulch wandered over and examined the strange lines and interesting patterns that she made. He nodded his head and looked over at Hiccup, who waited with bated breath for Mulch's translation.

"She says that Snotlout will be all right. He needs rest and plenty of it. Running a fever and probably some sort of head injury. Also inhaled a lot of smoke while in the forest. Other than that, he just needs to relax for a long while," the rancher explained, waving his hook-hand about in the air as he gesticulated.

Hiccup released a breath, glad to hear that Snotlout would be fine. He then stood and wandered over to Hookfang, stroking the Nightmare's snout which was warm and dry. He smiled softly, then looked over at the woman tending to the dragon.

"His cut isn't too terrible. It was just in a soft spot, so he bled a fair amount. I've managed to stop it. He seems bruised up and down the back... Or his scales may just be discolored, I'm not certain if dragons bruise. I think he took a hard fall, though, based off what Fishlegs said he saw. That being the case, I think Hookfang's just

tired and rattled," the woman explained.

Hiccup looked to the Nightmare and urged him to just relax. Just stroking him, Hiccup could feel the muscles of the dragon were tense, stiff, and tight. He whispered soothingly. "Snotlout will be fine. You'll be fine too, okay? You need to calm down for me, though. Can you do that? Can you just relax?"

Astrid came up and helped, running her hands up and down the back of Hookfang's head and scratching under his horns. The dragon let out a purr of content before his body seemed to release. He sunk a bit more into the sand as he let all his weight spread out to just lay there. The snapping of the fire up in the forest could be heard still running over the land, but the gentle lapping of the waves along the shore spread out with a calming effect. They brought with them a smooth chill that eased the heat that danced along the skin of the people sitting there along the shore. It was still dark out, but Hiccup could see the faintness of light breaking along the horizon, signaling the rising of the sun soon enough.

"Hiccup, we need to get back to Berk," Astrid suddenly said, her whisper barely heard by him.

She had stopped her stroking, turning and striding back over to Stormfly. She stopped in front of the Nadder, reaching up and scratching the dragon's throat. She made her way to the side, tugging herself up into her own saddle. The twins had never gotten off Barf and Belch. The two of them reached for their dragons' horns, waiting to be given the order to go.

Tuffnut grinned. "Yeah, they need us to help punch Alvin in the gut."

"You couldn't punch anyone in the gut in your state. That job is up to me," Ruffnut fired.

"Oh, yeah! Well when we see him, I'll show you. I'll do this!"

Tuffnut proceeded to launch his fist through the air. Even after swiping at nothing, a flash of pain flew across his face. He tried to wipe it off faster than any one could see it, but he failed. Ruffnut howled with laughter.

"Fine, fine. So maybe I can't. I'll just have Barf sick 'im."

"Barf can't do anything without Belch."

"Wanna' bet?" Tuffnut challenged and Barf turned its head beneath him to stare down Ruffnut. His mouth crackled with sparks that flew this way and that.

Ruffnut smirked. "Yeah!"

Belch turned, mouth leaking green haze. Colliding with sparks created a small bomb of sorts that forced both necks to snap back and nearly send their riders flying off. When they recovered, both Ruffnut and Tuffnut looked a little surprised and their hair was blown back, singed.

"Really, guys?" Astrid asked.

"You think we would have learned not to do that by now," Ruffnut shrugged.

Tuffnut's face looked horrified. "Learning? Wait, when did this become school? I thought we were in a war!"

No one even bothered to answer him.

Fishlegs started to Meatlug. He was about to clamber onto her back when Hiccup called his name and told him to stop. The large boy halted and turned, eyes wide as he watched Hiccup come up to him. He looked down into Hiccup's face and was met by the other boy's green eyes that looked a bit haunted.

"Look, Fishlegs. If you don't mind, I'd like you to stay here," he requested.

Fishlegs blinked. "But I'm part of this team too, Hiccup. I should go."

"I know, Legs... But so is Snotlout and I don't want to risk another dragon of Alvin's coming along and... you know."

Fishlegs caught on to what Hiccup was asking him to do. To stay to protect his cousin and the others. Since Fishlegs was the smartest, Hiccup wanted him to be around in case Snotlout or Hookfang needed help. The twins couldn't be trusted and Astrid would be of much more help in a fight than in medical attention.

"All right, Hiccup," Fishlegs resigned. He wasn't too keen on it, but he could see why it was necessary. "You'll owe me later for babysitting your cousin."

"Thanks, Legs," Hiccup chuckled lightly, seeming to relax.

Turning, Hiccup jogged up to Toothless. The Night fury snorted, eager to be going. He lowered himself as Hiccup pulled himself into the saddle. He hooked himself in and then latched in his prosthetic. Once they were settled, they took to the air, a Zippelback and Nadder following. Toothles spun in the direction of Berk and then raced onward. A large, black plume was alight above the village as fires continued to burn. As they neared closer, yells of men and women and the cries of dragons greeted their ears, welcoming them all back like a lion would welcome an antelope to its den.

"Find my dad," Hiccup called to the others. "I'm going to take out the last catapult I didn't get."

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><p>"We should get down to the docks. That's where they need us the most," Gobber called, running back over to his Bone Knapper. He paused, checking up on Thornado. "It doesn't look like your dragon's fully recovered yet."</p>

Stoick came pounding over, footsteps heavy. He bent down by Thornado and stroked his dragon's nose. Worry creased his face, torn between staying to protect his dragon when he needed to protect his people.

He knew which instinct he needed to follow, but it still hurt him so to do it. He felt Thornado whine softly, mouth parting slightly to let the noise escape. Stoick sighed and shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Thornado. I must go help my people," he apologized.

Thornado turned his head slightly as if to tell Stoick to go. He pushed himself to his feet, only to collapse again after only a second. He winced, clearly still trying to recover from the Nadder's poison. It was wearing off, but at an agonizingly slow pace that Stoick knew he couldn't wait for any more.

"Hey, Bone. Think you can stay here and look after a friend?" Gobber asked of the Bone Knapper.

The creature purred lightly, nosing Gobber slightly. Gobber returned the motion of affection with a scratch under the Bone Knapper's chin. The blacksmith smiled, thanking his friend softly before looking over to Stoick.

Stoick smiled under his mass of beard. "Thank you, Gobber. You too, Bone. Thornado, stay strong. I'll be back."

Together, Stoick and Gobber headed for the docks. They curled around along the boardwalk before passing under the stone arch. Instantly, they were surrounded by the flood of battle. The sounds were overwhelming, filling Stoick's entire being. Between his people, Thornado, and Hiccup, he could hardly concentrate on his fighting. The concern was powerful in his body, moving through every inch of him with each pulsation of blood. He was holding onto his sword like it was his last link to hope.

Many people were lost, but not as many as Stoick had thought. While the outcasts were breaking through, they were also thinning down, numbers shrinking. They were clumping into groups, trying to press forward as one. Above, the remaining dragons on their side waisted, sailing down and attempting to claw out or shoot fire at a Berk villager. Having been raised to fight the creatures, though, the people of Berk were proving difficult for the beasts to catch.

Berk dragons shot out of nowhere and would collide with an outcast dragon in a spitting battle before they broke apart, roaring at each other with anger. Fire shot this way and that. Much of the battle had come down to the docks and the Berk villagers began to push the outcasts back. The catapult of the outcasts unleashed another boulder. It came hurling through the air. It slammed into the cliffside, dropping debris and rocks down and nearly crushing some of Stoick's best men including his brother.

"Spitelout!" he called, pushing through the crowd to reach his younger sibling.

He bent down and pulled the other man to his feet. After looking him over, Stoick could see that his kin only had a slice along one arm. Relieved, he exhaled a breath. Over the years, Stoick and Spitelout had always been close, even despite the fact that Spitelout hadn't had the chance to be chief next to his brother. Spitelout had never once gotten jealous and, instead, had been supporting. Stoick's brother fought tooth and nail to prove he deserved to be Stoick's

right hand man alongside Gobber because of his skill and not just because he was a brother. While they had had their disputes when they were younger, now they worked together. Though Stoick sought Gobber's council most of the time, he still searched for his brother's insight and opinions at times.

In fact, it was Spitelout who had helped Stoick adjust to dragons the most while Hiccup had been unconscious. After all, his brother had befriended a Terrible Terror not long after the battle with the Red Death. After that, Spitelout had been all smiles over dragons, especially with his son's persistence with Hookfang being allowed to stay. He had opened the door for Toothless to come in when Stoick had tried to force the Night Fury to stay outside, Spitelout had suggested that the torches now be filled with fish for the dragons, and even forced Stoick to take care of Fang (the Terrible Terror) for a day to get used to the presence of the creatures. It had all turned out for the best and, for that, Stoick was even more grateful to his brother.

"Thank you, Stoick," Spitelout grinned.

Stoick grunted. "Don't thank me yet."

They turned to see an outcast charging them, brandishing his hammer. The man slowed when he saw the smirks cross the faces of the brothers. He was about to turn and flee when someone came from the air and kicked him in the face. The man stumbled back in surprise more so than pain, as the figure had been small, but he went far enough back to go tumbling from the dock and into the swirling of the ocean.

"So," Astrid began, straightening up where she landed and wiping the bangs from her eyes. "What'd I miss?"

"Astrid," Stoick bellowed, "Why are you here?"

"Yeah! Lets blow these ships!" a male voice hollered from the air.

Stoick and Spitelout turned their gazes sky bound to see the twins race by on Barfbelch, passing Stormfly, who was hovering nearby to wait for Astrid. The Zippelback swept over one of the outcasts' ships and began to spew their gas on it. It wasn't long before an explosion was set off, the wood of the boat splintering and the hulking ship rocking under the force. After a moment, it was clear the ship would no longer work, the mast burnt away and the bottom blown to bits. Barfbelch raced around to get the other ships.

Gobber came on over as Stoick saw a purple blast out at sea. The last catapult was destroyed by Toothless in a blue blaze.

With no where to run, the outcasts began to realize they were down to two options. Surrender or be killed. A couple tossed down their weapons and threw their hands to the air, their gazes flicking about to try and find Alvin or some sort of leader in the crowd of people. The rest found a new fury in themselves and swung harder with hammers, swiped faster with swords, and screeched louder their battle calls. The Vikings of Berk easily snuffed them out.

"Stoick... I think it's over," Spitelout muttered.

Gobber nodded. "They've all surrendered or are dead."

Stoick's eyes narrowed, scanning the men and women that were being forced to their knees to await their punishment. Stoick strode through them, his footsteps thunking along the wooden planks beneath him. None of them seemed to hold any sort of power and Stoick knew it wasn't over until it was over. Alvin wasn't to be seen. Was he dead? Or had he fled?

Turning to face his people, Stoick's grim face tried to brighten some. He looked to the air to see Berk dragons flying about in circles, cries of joy ringing through the air. Ruffnut and Tuffnut hooted from the heads of their Zippleback. They attempted a high-five and nearly tumbled from their seats before righting themselves. They laughed with glee.

Glancing out at sea, the horizon was a pale blue. It spread, climbing higher into the sky. A soft tint of orange laced its way into the color. The sun was about to rise. It filled Stoick with a foreboding sense, as he couldn't quite shake off the feeling that something was still wrong. The battle seemed won, but something in his bones didn't agree. He returned to looking at his people, who were expecting his shout of victory. They waited expectantly, blood smeared on their faces. The injured were being tended to and the whole air smelled of smoke that intermingled with coppery aroma of blood. Bodies littered along the docks, both enemies and friends a like.

"This battle is done," Stoick finally said, feeling the need to give his people some sort of assurance.

They could sense the uncertainty lacing his voice and only broke into subdued cheers. When it settled down, Stoick knew he needed to give some more orders. He searched his brain for commands, for what needed to be done. Yet things didn't seem to be coming into place. Like something was missing.

"I want the injured tended to immediately. Let's also work on getting the fires in the village out. I want another group gathering the bodies of our enemies to be disposed of and the bodies of our friends to be buried. I will also need a group to keep an eye on our prisoners," he began to order, his thick, heavy voice drumming through the air, alerting the dragons that flew about and the people that were meandering about.

Stoick looked over to Gobber and noticed that Spitelout was no longer with his friend. He was about to inquire as to his brother's whereabouts when his people came rushing forward with requests to do certain things or to ask where they should go.

\* \* \*

><p>"Good job, bud," Hiccup praised as the last catapult went up in blue flames.</p>

Toothless purred with accomplishment. He started on towards the village, dark wings pushing with the last remaining bits of energy he had left. Hiccup could sense the wariness that his Night Fury was facing. He could feel his own body protesting with pain at each movement he forced himself to do. He wanted nothing more than to

crawl into bed and stay there for a week.

As they grew closer to the village, Hiccup glanced down to the docks to see the last of the outcasts slowly giving in or having swords driven through them like they were kabobs. It made Hiccup wince, as he wasn't one for death. Seeing the skewering of the men made him feel a bit disgusted so he asked Toothless to let him off up in the village center. They flew upwards, heading for the clearing where remaining fires burned hot around the area, ash littering the ground like snow.

"Hey, Toothless, look," Hiccup pointed, seeing a Bone Knapper.

Toothless came down to rest in front of the creature. Hiccup looked over to see the Bone Knapper standing over a blue Thunderdrum. Hiccup cocked his head and then it struck him that it was Thornado. He swung off of Toothless and started forwards, approaching the two dragons. He came up in front of Thornado and bent down, inspecting the dragon.

He cocked his head in confusion. "What's wrong with you?"

Thornado let out a soft growl of frustration. He pushed himself to his feet and wobbled. He stumbled to the left before the Bone Knapper bent his head down to steady the Thunderdrum. Thornado leaned into the support gratefully and just looked at Hiccup with bright eyes, unable to explain the Nadder's poison to the boy. Then his body tensed and he hissed softly, looking at something behind Hiccup, who wheeled around to see what it was.

Alvin.

Blood Cry was heading straight towards them, Alvin on his back. A Nightmare followed, the dark green creature being ridden by another outcast. Blood Cry swelled and the Nightmare hissed before each launched its own attack. The scream came pounding down followed by a splash of sticky fire.

Hiccup cried out and darted away, dodging the attacks. The Bone Knapper bent over Thornado, taking the brunt of the attack while Toothless was out of harm's way. When the attacks stopped, the Bone Knapper straightened up, his bone armor scorched from the fire, but otherwise seeming fine. It sent a shattering roar up at the oncoming enemies, who parted, causing a split second of panic as the Bone Knapper tried to figure out which one would come to attack him and Thornado.

Hiccup was trying to make his way to Toothless but Blood Cry went speeding past him. Alvin jumped from his back, tucking into a roll before standing back to his feet, unsheathing his sword. Hiccup felt fear nearly freeze his blood, but he managed to turn and bolt away, only to find himself nearly running into the grip of the other outcast, who had jumped off the Nightmare. Hiccup wheeled another direction and ended up heading to the stairs of the Great Hall.

He glanced back, seeing the men thundering after him, weapons slicing at air behind him. Toothless and the Bone Knapper were snarling, each coming to a face off with Blood Cry and the Nightmare. Hiccup winced, knowing he was in trouble with his dragon busy. Left to his own,

Hiccup finally reached the doors of the Great Hall as the horizon began to seep orange into the sky.

Stumbling into the large room, Hiccup bolted on up to the fire pit and climbed onto the edge. He stood there, turning to see what Alvin would do.

The man and his accomplice entered, wicked smirks edging their lips and eyes wide with sparks of fury and false victory. Alvin was laughing, hulking form bouncing lightly with the noise that spilled out from his being. When he finally calmed, he turned to the man beside him saying, "Watch the door, Guts. I got this."

Guts nodded, closing the door until it was cracked open. He moved so that he could see out the crack, able to keep an eye on the village but unable to be seen from the outside world.

Hiccup remained standing on the edge of the fire pit. The fire behind him was smoldering, having run out of wood to burn over the night. Soft embers glowed dimly but most of the light of the room came from a couple torches that were still alight from around the room. The light danced about, shifting and shaking as the form of Alvin began to stride forward, looking at Hiccup with a terrifying glint. Hiccup didn't even blink, returning the look with a fierce gaze of his own, searching to figure out what he could do, trapped alone with the man in the Great Hall.

"Whatcha' going to do now, boy? You ain't got your dragons or dear old daddy to protect you here."

Alvin stopped a couple feet away, menacing look never wavering.

"I survived most of my life without Toothless. And my father doesn't need to protect me from you. Besides, you call me Dragon Conquerer, so I must be pretty tough. Bet I can take you on."

Alvin chuckled, ignoring Hiccup's petty attempt at sarcasm to ease the tension in the room. "Stoick doesn't need to protect you from me, you say? Why do you think you're still alive and here, son?"

Hiccup felt a slight jab of irritation. "What are you talking about? Last time I faced you all I needed was Toothless to get you on the run."

"What about the first time?"

First time? Hiccup knew that he was finally betraying himself, revealing confusion on his features at that remark. He had never heard or known of Alvin really... not until the time Alvin had come for him many weeks ago.

Alvin smirked, knowing he had Hiccup cornered. "I remember it like it was yesterday. You was only five years old I believe."

"You tried to kill me when I was five?"

"Does your father tell you anything, Dragon Conquerer?"

Hiccup winced. Between the name and the fact that Stoick may be hiding something from him, he felt a sense of unease wrap around him.

He began to edge along the fire pit. Then Alvin began to move forward, sheathing his sword. The outcast leader reached for another object around his waist. He pulled it out. A knife. The metal shimmered in the fire light.

"Time to fix that mistake that Stoick made all those years ago," Alvin muttered, more to himself.

Hiccup ran. He turned, adrenaline kicking through his body as he darted around the last of the fire pit. He jumped off and then headed for the far back wall. Spotting the shields of village chiefs' and sons' portraits, Hiccup went up and snagged the nearest one. He pulled it close to him, figuring it gave him a chance of surviving until somebody arrived to help. When he finally got the shield situated on his arm, however, he turned to find Alvin practically breathing in his face, his rotten breath stinging Hiccup's eyes.

Hiccup's back got pressed up against the wall as Alvin pushed his free hand against the shield, pinning Hiccup up. Alvin shoved harder. Hiccup's arm felt like it was being crushed between the shield and his body while his whole body was nearly causing an indent in the wall behind him. His ribcage felt like it might collapse in and he was pretty sure one rib was jabbing a lung. He groped for air, taking what he could.

Alvin then ripped the shield away, throwing it behind him and letting it clatter to the floor loudly. It was taken from him by such a force that Hiccup felt his wrist snap. He cried out and pulled it close to him. His right hand wrapped around the wrist, squeezing it to try and suppress the pain that drummed through his hand with each heartbeat. He leaned with his back against the wall, legs shakily holding him up. When he looked back up from his wrist to the madman, Alvin was driving the knife forward.

Since Hiccup's arms were crossed in front of his chest, Alvin pushed his knife into the flesh of Hiccup's left thigh, blood welling up and soaking through Hiccup's pants. Hiccup's legs buckled out from under him and he let himself crash to the floor, unable to catch himself. He was on his back, looking up at Alvin with fury and agony. The pain that rippled through his left thigh was so strong that he couldn't hardly even feel it any more. He refused to move his arms even as Alvin took his now free hands and wrapped one around Hiccup's injured thigh while the other grabbed the prosthetic.

"I hope this hurts," Alvin sneered, then yanked the prosthetic off, tossing it over by the shield.

The bindings that kept it attached burned at Hiccup's skin as they were removed, but it was hard to feel it over the cold metal of the steel in his thigh. Finally, his right arm released his wrist and he reached down, hand coming around the handle of the knife. He pulled it out, the blood now running freely from the wound. He slashed it out, hitting Alvin's forearm. The wound was barely deep enough to draw blood, as Alvin had flinched back to avoid it stabbing him any deeper.

Alvin reached out and snatched Hiccup's arm with his left hand, slamming it down against the floor. Hiccup released the dagger and Alvin reclaimed it with his right hand.

"Now, than, Dragon Conquerer. It ends here. I wonder... will your dragon be there in the afterlife to greet you?"

Hiccup felt his body convulse with agony. Between his bleeding leg, his arm being crushed under Alvin's grip, and the thought of Toothless, he wasn't sure what was going on. The world spun around him in circles and he felt himself fading from his body. Alvin was hovering the knife over Hiccup's heart, ready to plunge it through his chest. Hiccup could see himself, as he looked down at the scene from above. He saw his body jerking with pain, but was numb to the actual feelings. He could see himself gasping for breath and the blood that splattered along his clothes. The ground beneath the stump of his leg was a puddle of crimson, gleaming in the faint light of the room.

Then the Great Hall doors burst open and Guts let out a cry of alarm.

\* \* \*

><p>Fweee~</p>

We're almost done with this battle here. Wonder who's come to Hiccup's rescue? And what was Stoick's mistake?

Stay tuned 8D

I feel like a TV...

TO BE CONTINUED...

DUN DUN DUN...

I shouldn't have eaten that Sour Patch...

Review, my luffs!

Love,

Deyoxis

## 9. The War Isn't Over

I just want to let you guys know that, right after I submit a chapter, I start going through little modes of panic where I feel like I wrote the whole chapter just horribly and that all my watchers will suddenly vanish and that no one will give me any sort of feedback and how I don't feel like I'm that good of a writer... And then I worry about run-on sentences... o.O

>But, the point I'm trying to get to is that every review, every follow, and every fave are appreciated to such a high degree. Getting that email or seeing that review number go up just makes me feel incredible. **So thank you so much to all of you. This means a lot to me to have you here reading this.**

I love any sort of review, no matter how long or short (so long as it isn't a flame, of course x3).

Anyways, sorry this update is a bit late for me. It was an extremely hectic week with three tests. I also didn't do particularly well on them even with all the studying I did... So I've been a bit down and wanted to wait until I was in a better mood before I wrote this chapter. Then a football game, partying, and getting ready for Halloween has also made life a bit busier x3

**\*\*Iron-Mantis:\*\*** Actually, with where I'm headed, Alvin doesn't really have much to do with Val's death. You'll see this over the next couple chapters.

By the way, is Mildew's sheep named Mungus or Fungus...? I thought it was Fungus, but I've seen Mungus xD I'm going to stick with Fungus.

#### **\*\*Chapter Nine: The War Isn't Over\*\***

Toothless was out of range as Blood Cry and the Nightmare sent their attacks raining down. The Bone Knapper took the brute of the attack, leaning over the recovering Thornado. Toothless growled up at the approaching enemies, but forced himself to turn back and make sure Hiccup was all right. His boy had scampered out of the way and was now trying to make his way back towards Toothless. The Night Fury was about to bound forward to meet Hiccup when a blood red Thunderdrum landed before him. Blood Cry.

Toothless snarled, looking past Blood Cry to see Hiccup getting chased up into the Great Hall by Alvin and another outcast. The boy's thin form was just managing to stay ahead of the men and he soon slipped in between the doors. The men followed him in and Toothless watched the doors close until one was only opened as a thin crack. He couldn't see inside, but the flickering of firelight in the crack alerted him that something was happening.

Toothless felt a flare of fear in the pit of his stomach. Hiccup was no match for the two men that had him cornered. Toothless understood that clearly. If Hiccup was going to survive, they needed to be together. Toothless had promised himself to protect the boy ever since Hiccup had been his savior so long ago. Hiccup didn't have to release him from the bindings when he was shot from the sky. The boy could have left him to be found by another Viking. Even when Hiccup had released him, the boy still could have left him in that cove to die with no way of escaping. Hiccup hadn't, though. Hiccup had come back. Hiccup had befriended him. Hiccup had searched for a way to help him fly again. No Viking would have done that but Hiccup. No other dragon would have ever gone out of his way to try and help him. Only Hiccup. For that, Toothless owed him everything.

When Toothless refocused his attention on the dragon in front of him, he saw the beast swelling up like a large balloon. Toothless' eyes widened in surprise before he dove to the left, rolling over and just beating out of the way of the scream that rushed past him in a wake of sound. He was back on his feet in a flash, teeth bared and green eyes flashing angrily as he stared at the Thunderdrum.

Toothless was standing next to the Bone Knapper now. Thornado was pushing himself to his feet, snarling at the threats. The Bone Knapper raised his wings, bones creaking with each little movement. His mouth gaped open, large, bone white teeth looking dangerously sharp. The dragon let out a burst of power in a mighty scream,

warning Blood Cry and the Nightmare not to get too close.

Beneath him, Thornado attempted to let out an onslaught, but still hadn't regained all his strength quite yet and collapsed in a heap, frustration evident in his glare.

Blood Cry seemed to laugh dryly at Thornado's weakness. The Nightmare beside him smirked deviously and the two neared, readying themselves. Toothless was surging with anger at this point, wanting to just be rid of these dragons so he could go aid Hiccup.

Toothless tensed, muscles rippling under his thick, inky scales. He glanced to his left and exchanged a look with the Bone Knapper. Then he lowered himself, trying to get on the attack mode. Toothless had fought from the ground before, but it wasn't ever going to be as easily done as from the air. His speed and firepower was practically unmatched, but on the ground he was more vulnerable. He couldn't let himself be caught off guard. He had to be prepared for anything, though he knew himself well enough to take on the Nightmare alone and maybe even Blood Cry alone. Together would be harder and until Thornado was well, the Bone Knapper could only aid so much.

The Nightmare sucked in a breath as it prepared to blast out fire at them. Toothless dove forward, coming up under the long, slender neck. He pushed himself up and wrapped as much of his jaw as he could around the Nightmare's throat. He heard the dragon - a female - let out a strangled cry of distress which sounded muffled under the hold of Toothless' clench. He pulled the female's neck down and pinned it against the earth, his claws digging into the ground as he held her in place. She writhed underneath him, her head swinging around and her body scrabbling against the earth. Scores from claws and talons were struck upon the ground as she panicked momentarily. Eventually, she seemed to regain herself and realized she could swing her head around enough to dig her own teeth into Toothless' closest wing thanks to her elongated neck.

The Night Fury wasn't biting hard enough to break through her scales. In fact, he was mostly just attempting to choke her, force her to weaken. He felt her scales cracking as he tightened his jaw, but then he felt an agonizing pain lacing along the upper portion of his left wing. He faltered, nearly letting go, but managing to bite harder instead. His strength proved a bit greater as she eventually lost the might to hold her own bite and released. She had taken a nip high enough on his wing that she didn't draw blood, only pinched the leathery flap. He beat his wing a couple times, letting it come down on her head as he did so while he checked to be sure that she hadn't punctured anything. It didn't seem she had broken through. No wonder Snotlout could survive Hookfang's bites... Nightmare's teeth were too awkward to hardly hurt anything.

He heard the sound of Blood Cry making a move on him. He felt a weight come crashing onto his shoulders, a weight worse than even that of Stoick's. It pushed him even harder down upon the Nightmare, who lost the entire ability to breath. Her gasps for air under his jaws made Toothless feel sick. He had grown up killing others at times to protect himself, but he didn't exactly want to kill this Nightmare just because Blood Cry was crushing him which, in turn, was crushing her.

Pain dug into his shoulders as Blood Cry's claws found their way into

his scaly skin. He heard an intake of breath, sharp but long. The weight on his shoulders lightened and Toothless knew that meant that Blood Cry was filling with air. The Thunderdrum was going to release his cry right onto the back of Toothless' head. If it didn't kill him, it would sure knock him out. He flattened himself, trying to prepare for what was coming. He ignored the squirming of the Nightmare, shutting his eyes and attempting to think of a way to save himself. He heard the Bone Knapper call out to him, but it was distant to Toothless.

A thought crossed him mind and his eyes shot back open, green orbs dazzlingly bright against the pale sky as morning began to slink across the land. Thrusting himself up, Tootless released his grip on the Nightmare. He took advantage of Blood Cry's body of air and tossed him off in a powerful upward shot. Toothless came back down, landing awkwardly but stumbling into a recovery. Once he found his footing, he looked up to see Blood Cry flapping about in the air, trying to maneuver around to get after Toothless.

The red beast shrieked with anger, letting out a small blast of sound before sucking in more air, and Toothless snarled back. As the bloated Blood Cry was about to face him, a blue mass barreled into Blood Cry. The red Thunderdrum's attack shot out into the empty sky, getting lost into the atmosphere before Blood Cry and his attacker came crashing to the ground. The blue mass that had collided with him was Thornado. The other Thundrdrum straightened up from on top of Blood Cry and bellowed with triumph.

Blood Cry responded with fury, trying to scratch out at Thornado, but was pinned on his back.

Thornado looked over at Toothless, seeming almost to smile. The poison had lost its affect and so the Thunderdrum was back to being himself again. Wild and fierce. He held Blood Cry down as best as he could and motioned with his head that Toothless needed to get to the Great Hall. The Night Fury breathed a sigh of relief and began to head that way, only to nearly take out Spitelout, who came running up into the clearing.

"Toothless!" Spitelout shouted out in surprise, reeling to a stop and turning to look at the black dragon quizzically.

Toothless whined softly, craning his head around to look at his empty saddle before glancing up at the Great Hall. He was feeling impatient so he started to bound back off to the stairs before Spitelout could respond.

Spiteout called him to stop, saying, "Toothless wait!"

The Night Fury paused, feeling worry course his veins at that instant. He needed to get to Hiccup. Now. What was so important for Spitelout to keep him from getting to his best friend?

Spiteout had turned to look at Blood Cry, the Bone Knapper, Thornado, and the Nightmare. Thornado still had Blood Cry pinned much to Blood Cry's obvious rage. The Nightmare was stumbling about, trying to dodge the Bone Knapper's sprays of fire. Spitelout neared them some, catching their attention and the four dragons glimpsed at him questioningly, briefly forgetting their own battles. Spitelout looked to Thornado, "When you get a chance, you gotta' get Stoick."

Get him to the Great Hall. For now, take those dragons down!"

Thornado nodded, yellow eyes gleaming with an intensity. Beneath him, Blood Cry hissed and continued to writhe. Thornado scored his claws against Blood Cry's soft underbelly. The liquid for which the red Thunderdrum was named seeped out, spreading along his belly. Its coppery smell danced through the brightening air as the first rays of sunlight broke out above the horizon, painting the wide expanse above them all in a dull orange hue.

The Nightmare rolled to the side to avoid the Bone Knapper's lunging bite. She snarled before spinning and seeing Thornado and Blood Cry. She stumbled forward, her teeth managing to find Thornado's tail. Though the dragon was heavy, she managed to yank him hard enough to throw him off balance. Thornado let out a small wail of agony before Blood Cry heaved him off and rolled to his feet, which was difficult to do when the width of one's body was practically larger than the length.

Thornado pulled his tail from the Nightmare's hold and dashed over to stand beside the Bone Knapper. The two of them stood their ground, bodies tightening as they braced themselves for the next onslaught. Looking over their two opponents, they could easily see that the Nightmare was more worn down thanks to Toothless' early attack on her. Her neck seemed almost limp, weakened from where Toothless had nearly crushed her windpipe. Her deep breaths revealed a struggle to keep on going so they knew they needed to remove her from the picture. Once that was accomplished, Blood Cry would make an even easier enemy to beat.

Blood Cry was running towards them, his flattened body skimming along the ground as he approached. Thornado was ready to go, but the Bone Knapper beat him to the punch. The larger dragon charged forward, footsteps pounding the ground as he lowered his head. As Blood Cry made to jump upon him, the Bone Knapper snapped his head up, his horns and skull hitting the tender underside of the Thunderdrum.

Blood Cry's scream of agony flooded the air as he went crashing off a ways. He had still been bleeding and sore from Thornado's early clawing at his belly, but the collision of bone to the wound only made it deepen and ache.

The hit hardly phased the Bone Knapper. Though Blood Cry's own blood now splattered as dark drops on his bone armor, he continued to head straight forward, coming up straight towards the Nightmare. He opened his mouth, unleashing a splash of fire. The Nighthmare fired back her own and the two heat waves hit each other with a blinding impact of light. The Bone Knapper came to a stop, luring over the Nightmare.

Thornado came bounding up at that point, then flew into the air. He circled up and over the Nightmare before turning and heading straight down towards her. He inflated before feeling his power sweep out of him and come pouring down onto the Nightmare like a horrendous waterfall of noise. The dragon yelped in surprise and desperation, clearly in pain. Thornado pulled up the last second and landed a couple feet off, turning and facing her.

The Nightmare, dazed and injured, decided she had enough. She turned and feebly made her way to the cliffside of Berk before tumbling off the edge. She struggled to get her wings working. She managed to avoid hitting the water before she took off, heading into the distance, her form vanishing in the bright light of the horizon. The sun had nearly completed its ascent above the skyline.

Thornado and the Bone Knapper swung their forms around to see Blood Cry. The other Thunderdrum had recovered, but seemed to be backing away as he saw his ally fly off into the distance. The red beast cried out with a rage fueled by the sudden knowing of loss. With nothing left to lose, he stopped and readied himself for the final fight, refusing to give in as easily as the Nightmare.

The Bone Knapper made some clicking noises. Thornado shot him a look of surprise, hesitant to do as the Bone Knapper suggested. The towering dragon merely glanced at him reassuringly and Thornado knew that the other creature was right. So he turned, leaving the Bone Knapper to face Blood Cry alone while he took the air to fetch Stoick.

\* \* \*

><p>Spiteout, Toothless behind him, shoved open the doors of the Great Hall with such a force that Guts, who had turned to watch Alvin kill Hiccup, was caught so off guard that he let out a cry of alarm, flailing his arms about and spinning to face the newcomer. Spiteout gripped the handle of his sword, unsheathing it. He heard Toothless' usual cry as the dragon built up power before the blue fire whizzed through the air towards Alvin.</p>

The outcast was hit on the shoulder plate, protecting him from being burned. The impact of the blast, however, sent him flying over Hiccup to crash to the ground many yards away. Alvin dropped the dagger in the process, the short blade coming to rest beside Hiccup's body. The boy's body managed to cease its convulsing as Hiccup regained full consciousness, having been drifting away as Alvin pinned him. Alvin shrieked curses of rage. Every shout and spitting mutter he let escape his lips filled the Great Hall, shadowing every nook and cranny with the darkness of his fury. The man pushed himself to his feet, tossing his head about to look over at the arrivals.

Toothless had darted forward to stand between Hiccup and Alvin. The Night Fury let out another shot at the man, one that he dodged easily now that he knew it was coming. The fire scorched along the wall behind him, a black smudge on the cold rock.

While Toothless kept Alvin from getting to Hiccup, Spiteout took the opportunity to go after Guts. The smaller outcast had brought out a sword of his own. Like Spiteout's, it was slick with dried blood, seeming dark even in the billowing light of the torches. The men held their weapons before them, perspiration sliding down their foreheads as they eyed each other, each waiting for the other to make the first move. Spiteout began to side-step to the right, circling the other man, who slowly turned in place to keep both eyes upon the chief's brother.

Spiteout and Hiccup didn't have much of a relationship until recently. After all, for most of Hiccup's life so far, he had been such a disgrace that Spiteout and his family didn't often associate

themselves with the boy despite Spitelout's relationship with Stoick. After the whole ordeal with the Red Death and Spitelout being quicker to accept dragons that Stoick, he and Hiccup had gained some sort of ground with each other. Hiccup had helped him train Fang, had come over for dinner, and was even (relatively) good friends with Snotlout. Though Spitelout still struggled to understand Hiccup's odd internal workings, he had come to appreciate them and liked to smile and wave to his nephew when he saw him. Just that little gesture helped the two come to enjoy each other a little more when in the presence of one another. So now, as he was about to take on Guts, he knew that he had to do this. For Hiccup and for Stoick, his brother.

For Spitelout knew that if Stoick lost his son, his brother could break down to bits. The loss of Valhallarama had been a hard enough hit for Stoick. To lose Hiccup could be disastrous. Spitelout wasn't going to let that happen.

Letting out a war cry, Spitelout swung his sword around from the right, hearing metal slice through the air. Guts blocked it and the clashing of the two swords hitting each other began to echo dimly over the soft roars of Toothless. Alvin's cries were louder, but not as frequent as Spitelout and Guts' weapons colliding. The rhythm of the fight started off steady, but increasingly became faster. Each hit was thrown with more strength and more speed. Their feet moved wildly to keep in sync with one another. Vikings were not particularly graceful fighters, so the whole ordeal seemed more a mess of flailing limbs than a battle between trained warriors.

Guts tried a slash at Spitelout's knees. Spitelout snorted, seeing Guts' flawed attack in a heartbeat. While the outcast tried to strike low at a point harder to lower himself to, Spitelout shoved his own sword forward, finding a weak spot in Guts' armor. The sword plunged through flesh and organs. The hilt gleamed with sweat that was coming from Spitelout's hands. Spitelout let his sword stay there for a moment while Guts' attack failed him, caught so off guard that he only ended up letting his sword fly from his hand and clatter to the ground.

Guts looked down, Spitelout's weapon protruding from him chest. His eyes widened in fear and realization but Spitelout felt no pity for the man. He reached forward, grasping the hilt and raising a foot. He shoved his foot into Guts' stomach, pushing the body away from his sword, which came out with a red, sticky slime. It smelled, the stench reeking the air. Spitelout paid it no mind, watching as Guts collapsed backwards onto the floor, arms crashing open to the sides. The eyes of Guts went blank, their empty gaze staring straight up to the ceiling of the Great Hall. No rise and fall of the chest. Spitelout was the victor.

The winning man turned his cold gaze to that of Alvin. The outcast leader was trying to move closer to Hiccup, but Toothless cut off every angle. The Night Fury, growing agitated with Alvin, let out an earsplitting cry, lunging forward some with retracted teeth baring. Never had Spitelout seen those green eyes quite so fiery as they were now. He would hate to be Toothless' enemy.

Feeling the desire to finish this, Spitelout bolted forward, clutching his sword. He was coming up behind Alvin when the man seemed to sense him and wheeled around. Alvin barely had time to

bring his sword back out to spare his own life before Spitelout was baring down on him with a strike meant to come down onto Alvin's skull. Alvin sent kicks into Spitelout's shins to force him to the ground. Spitelout went down onto his knees and suddenly felt the full weight of Alvin now pressing down on his sword.

"That was a cheap move!" Spitelout snarled.

Alvin chuckled. "Wait until you try this one."

Swords still pushing against each other, but with Spitelout forced to the ground, Alvin once again swung a kick. It met the right side of Spitelout's head and he was sent spinning to the left. He was on his stomach. He pushed himself onto his elbows and made to stand back up. He wasn't fast enough. He felt the tip of the sword push through his back and the next thing he knew, the metal was now shoving up through his chest below his heart. He looked down and saw the point sticking out in front of him. Blood dripped down along the edges. His blood. The breath he had been taking was caught in his throat and his body exploded with such agony that every inch of him went numb in an instant.

"NO!" a voice cried, but it sounded like it was underwater. Spitelout craned his head enough to notice that it was Hiccup. The boy was propping himself up with his right hand while his face twisted in pain from the physical injuries he had and the sight he was watching.

Spitelout felt the smallest of chuckles escape his throat as he looked at Hiccup. He wasn't sure what was funny, but he smiled gently at his nephew. He managed to take another intake of breath as his body fought to live, even as Alvin pulled the sword from him. Spitelout remained on his knees, looking at Hiccup with that sad smile.

"It'll be all right, Hiccup. Stoick will be here soon," he muttered softly, then felt himself crumple into a heap.

\* \* \*

><p>Stoick came in right as he watched his brother's body hit the ground. His entire being went cold for a moment, watching the struggling rise and fall of Spitelout's chest as his brother still clung to life. Then the chill was swept away in a burst of heated hatred. Stoick bellowed into the air with such a might that it rivaled even that of his dragon, Thornado, who stood behind him along with Gobber and most of the villagers. Thornado had retrieved his rider in a record speed for a Thunderdrum, so now Stoick and all those from the docks had all come to see what it was Thornado had been wanting them to see. Stoick was not pleased with the sight.</p>

He wasted no time barging in, sidestepping Guts' lifeless form to race towards Alvin, sword brandishing in the air. Alvin, however, was not ready to be defeated. The man had noticed Toothless' diverted attention towards checking over Hiccup and now he rushed the dragon, sheathing his sword. The outcast wrapped his beefy arms around the Night Fury's head before pushing the dragon's head against the ground. As soon as he had the hold, he retrieved his sword again and pressed it against the back of the dragon's neck.

"Toothless," Hiccup moaned, reaching for his dragon, but too weak to do more than that.

Alvin spat, "Don't move! That includes you, Stoick!"

Stoick halted, though every ounce of anger urged him to keep moving forward. The one droplet of dread in his stomach forced him to stop, though.

"You move and the dragon here loses his head. You know I can do it, Stoick. I can kill him with one fell swoop. One twitch of the wrist. Stop your moving, dragon, or I'll kill your boy as soon as I'm done with you!"

Toothless ceased. He had been close to throwing Alvin off, but he wasn't sure how good of a reaction time Alvin would have. If the outcast could sense what Toothless was going to do then the man could behead him before Toothless had time to jerk Alvin off. He also didn't want to risk Hiccup's safety. The boy was a mess on the floor, splattered with blood and the knife wound on his thigh still oozing. Hiccup had gotten a hold of the knife Alvin had dropped, but knew there was nothing he could do with it.

Stoick glared at Alvin. "What do you want?"

"Drop your sword."

Stoick hesitated, but Alvin pushed the cold steel of his blade closer to Toothless' neck. Stoick released his weapon and it clattered to the ground with an intense echo.

"Now then," Alvin said wickedly, "You're going to let me leave on Blood Cry without harming me."

"Why should I do that?" Stoick snarled, eyes blazing back up and taking a step closer to Alvin.

Alvin chopped the sword down hard and it dug some into Toothless' neck. The Night Fury yelped, tail lashing in response to the pain. Though the claw marks on his back had stopped bleeding, now his neck was slowly pooling as Alvin let his sword slowly slide through his skin. Toothless snarled, unable to believe that Alvin had the strength to puncture him. No wonder Vikings had been such good dragon killers.

Stoick stopped and raised up his hands to show he wasn't going to attack. His eyes flickered to Hiccup. His son had fallen back down on his side, unable to prop himself up anymore. He still clutched the knife, hands white, as if it might aid him. His whole being seemed paler than normal, the freckles on his face standing out clearly. His green eyes were dulled and his face was contorted with the agony that seared his body. He was looking at Toothless with worry. Stoick then looked to his fallen brother. Spitelout was still fighting to stay alive. His brother's wife, Blisteria, was kneeling beside her husband, whispering gently, trying to keep him aroused. A healer had come forward and was meekly attempting to stop the blood flow, though they knew it was too late.

Though every fiber of Stoick's entire being wanted nothing more than

to murder Alvin then and there, he knew that if Toothless were killed, then Hiccup would be dead, too. His son would become a ghost to the world without his dragon, and Stoick didn't want that. He couldn't have that. So he knew he had no choice.

"Gobber," he called and his friend came sidling up beside him. "Go tell your Bone Knapper to release the Thunderdrum. I'll escort Alvin outside."

Alvin snorted. "Give me your word you won't attack me until the next time we meet."

"I give you my word," Stoick promised, hating it.

He knew he should just forget his word and kill the traitor, but that was not how he ruled. No matter how much of a monster Alvin was, Stoick knew he couldn't go back on his promises. It would only be fuel for the followers of Alvin that may have possibly escaped. Or for other tribes that wished to take Berk for their own. There was no completely positive outcome to any of the choices Stoick could have made then.

Alvin released Toothless, who pulled himself away with a hiss. He twisted his neck around a bit, making sure the wound wasn't too bad. Though the Night Fury grimaced with pain, everything seemed fully functional, so Stoick knew the dragon would be all right. The outcast passed Stoick, heading through the parted villagers to follow Gobber outside. Stoick trailed him, seething.

Once outside, Gobber approached the Bone Knapper, who had a giant foot pressing Blood Cry to the ground. Gobber ordered the dragon to release. The Bone Knapper seemed agitated, but eventually obeyed and removed himself. Blood Cry shakily stood and watched Alvin near him.

"Don't worry. We're not done here," Alvin breathed icily to the dragon.

Blood Cry's eyes narrowed, letting Alvin climb onto his back before taking to the sky, the bright sunshine of the new day bathing everything in a warm light. Though the island, to Stoick, had never felt colder. He turned and rushed back into the Great Hall. His heart jumped to his chest as he noticed Hiccup still on the ground, Toothless hovering over him and whimpering. The healer had made his way to Hiccup, Astrid and the twins trailing him.

"Is he going to be all right?" Stoick breathed as he approached, kneeling down.

He saw Astrid's eyes watering as she looked Hiccup over. She knelt down beside Toothless, stroking the nose of the black dragon, who sighed sadly. Ruffnut and Tuffnut stood behind the healer, both of them looking a bit down as they watched the healer begin to examine Hiccup.

The boy stirred, looking up at his father. "I'll be fine, dad. Go see Uncle Spitelout."

Stoick's mind then remembered his brother. He turned his head to look over to Spitelout and Blisteria. He wandered near to them, barely

making it to his younger brother before his legs gave out beneath him. He came down beside Spitelout, who was being cradled in Blisteria's arms.

Spitelout managed to turn his head enough to stare Stoick in the eyes.

"Spite," Stoick choked, it just now hitting him that his brother was dying.

The brother who had been with him through thick and thin. The brother who had supported him all through his chiefdom. The brother who was his right hand man alongside Gobber. The brother who was his brother. He was dying.

Spitelout's face broke out into a gentle smile. "Is Hiccup all right?"

"He'll be fine."

"Good. Keep up the great work, brother. He's turned out into a real fine boy. Strong. Like his dad."

"And his uncle," Stoick breathed.

Stoick knew that Spitelout didn't mean physical strength. Hiccup had real strength, though. A stubborn nature with a heart of gold. Even now, lying in his own blood, he was strong. Stoick glanced back and saw that the healer was having Ruffnut, Tuffnut, and Astrid help him apply pressure to the knife wound while trying to move him to a better place to work. Gobber retrieved the prosthetic leg of Hiccup's that had been ripped off and then headed over to see if he could be of assistance. Toothless watched dutifully, eyes never wavering.

Spitelout took a sharp intake of breath as his face turned to Blisteria, pain etched into the creases of his cheeks and forehead. "I love you, honey. Tell Snotlout to keep it up. He's on the right path to being a good warrior."

Then his eyes went vacant as a soft sigh left his lips. Stoick felt his heart sink from his throat to the pit of his stomach. Though a strong man, seeing his younger brother breathe his last breath still made him feel like he had taken an onslaught of punches to the gut. He struggled to hide the tears in his eyes, needing to be strong for his village. Blisteria wept, her left hand, which wasn't cradling Spitelout, was stroking the stubble of his beard, shaking as she traced the outline of her husband's face. She leaned forward, her head falling against Spitelout's chest, just above the wound that killed him, her salty tears mixing with the blood that stained his garment. She clutched him in her arms, breathing sweet words to him though he could no longer hear them.

Stoick reached forward and closed his brother's eyes. He looked up at the villagers that were crammed at the entrance of the Great Hall.

"Are the fires put out?" he asked, though his voice struggled to escape his throat.

Gobber nodded, coming up in front of Stoick so that man could see him, unneeded currently for Hiccup's recovery.

"Good. Let us gather the dead. And I need a couple men to go fetch the group out with Mulch and Bucket. Let us celebrate the lives of those who have passed on with a proper burial," Stoick choked the order.

\* \* \*

><p>Usually, burials were personal. The site that those who passed on were buried at was a ways away from the village. Now, though, everyone was gathered together, bodies huddled closely for warmth against the chill. The sun was high in the sky, but sinking, revealing it was past noon. It had taken a while to reclaim the elderly, pregnant women, and children. Stormfly and Barfbelch had helped Hookfang to fly back to the village. There, he remained with the other dragons, as the Berk islanders didn't think the dragons would understand the burial process as they did and wouldn't give it the respect it deserved. The dragons seemed to realize this was a human tradition, and seemed fine to stay out of it aside from Fang.</p>

The graveyard was a vast hillside. Not a very steep one, so easy enough for everyone to gather along. The wind bit at the people standing there as they looked up to Stoick, who stood before the family members of all of them people who had lost a loved one in the war. A total of ninety two people had died, nearly a third of the villagers who had fought in the battle. Most every one had lost some sort of relation but those who didn't watched from further below, their eyes brimmed with tears for their friends.

Fishlegs, the twins, and Astrid were lucky, having not lost anyone close to them. They stood up at the top anyways, though, to support Snotlout. Hiccup wasn't present, as he had fallen asleep and was recovering at home in bed. The group watched Snotlout with pained expressions as the boy who always tried to act tough seemed broken down before them. His head had a fresh bandage wrapped around it though he looked like a mess from where he stood beside his mother and Stoick.

Even the twins stood in silence, knowing quite clearly that this was not a moment for them to speak.

Back behind everyone, Mildew stood in a blanket of noiselessness. He held Fungus close to him, plotting speeches for later to use the deaths to his advantage in driving off the dragons. For now, though, he wasn't about to disrupt the ceremony.

The dead had been burned, their ashes encased in wooden boxes. Stoick held the box of his brother's, his fingers wrapped so tightly around it that splinters slid into his calloused hands. He didn't care. The pain of each wedge of wood seemed to help drown out the pain of loss.

The holes had been made. Blisteria and the other Vikings were placing articles that belonged to the deceased inside. It was a proper custom. Once done, Blisteria turned to take the box from Stoick, sniffling softly as she reached for it. Her dark hair was matted and tangled around her face as she accepted it from him before

turning and kneeling down to the hole. Once she had placed it in, Snotlout began to heap the dirt back over top, his movements sluggish. Once everyone was completely buried, stones were placed in a shape in their honor as a marking place, much like the rest of the graves that surrounded them on the hill.

A bird chirped in the distance before another sweeping of wind rustled the trees at the bottom of the hill. The sound sounded low and soft, a weeping that blended in with the weeping of the people of Berk. The sun danced along the ground and seemed to brighten when it hit the floating clouds that passed by. A peaceful day it had turned out to be once the battle was over. But one full of distraught.

Stoick and Snotlout placed the stones. They made the shape of a sword, meant to symbolize the power, strength, and reliance that Spitelout had so represented in their lives.

As they stood back up straight, Snotlout seemed to be overcome with a sort of vexation. He reached up, hands wrapping around the horns of his helmet. He lifted it from his bandaged head and his eyes were alight with a new sort of fire. Flinging his helmet to the ground, he fell to his knees before his father's grave.

"I'll make you proud! I'll be so tough that people will remember our family name for generations!"

Snotlout's promise was screamed into the empty air. It struck the people gathered on the hillside, who were, at first, confused by Snotlout's sudden act. They exchanged glances, unsure of what to do before Stoick suddenly stepped forward and his booming voice vibrated in their cores.

"Alvin will pay."

With that, Stoick removed his own helmet and tossed it to the ground. Blisteria followed suite, her's rolling down the hill a couple feet before coming to a rest. The twins were next, then Fishlegs (whose helmet was actually knocked off for him by Fang, who rested on his shoulder), and then followed by the rest of the villagers who were wearing helmets. Astrid, having no helmet but feeling the need to partake, removed the band around her head and let it drop to the ground beside Ruffnut and Tuffnut's helmets. It was not a normal tradition and would probably never be done again, but with that, the act seemed to bind the village together.

With that, the promise for revenge and the desire to avenge, was sealed.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup woke up feeling hungry and bone-tired. None of his muscles seemed to want to work so he remained in his bed, staring up at the ceiling for a long while before he finally found the inner strength to move. Once he sat up, he was greeted by the slime of a tongue from Toothless.</p>

"And that's just how I wanted to wake up this morning," Hiccup muttered, though also a bit amused.

He smiled at the Night Fury, who sat beside his bed with glittering eyes. The black dragon jumped around, seeming completely fine despite the war that had occurred so recently. The wounds on the dragon's back, neck, and wing were all ready sealed enough that that pain was hardly noticeable.

Hiccup couldn't hold down the swelling feeling of joy that bubbled in his chest. He was alive. Toothless was alive. All his friends were alive. He had feared that the whole island would fall thanks to him, but it was still here, just a little broken. He grinned, pushing himself out of bed and unsteadily onto his foot. His prosthetic had been rebound. His left thigh was aching with a burning pain and he was reminded of the knife wound that was there. Toothless was more than happy to provide support for his boy as Hiccup stumbled to the steps, attempting to go downstairs.

"Hiccup!" a voice called up to him. Hiccup peered down to see his father standing at the bottom of the steps, mouth slightly open as he looked up.

Hiccup beamed, sitting on his butt and sliding down one step at a time to avoid the pressure on his leg. As his hands maneuvered him down the steps, he realized his left wrist was in a cast, but it didn't ache with the pain like his leg did. Toothless followed behind slowly, diligently. Hiccup was watching his father, but noticed that Stoick's thrilled expression looked a bit pained as Hiccup neared him. The chief waited until Hiccup was close enough and then pulled his son into a hug, trying to be as gentle as possible with Hiccup's weakened body. Hiccup didn't mind the small slivers of pain from the embrace, he was just glad his father was still around to crush him.

When Stoick released him, Hiccup swallowed down air saying, "Hey, dad. So, what'd I miss?"

"Well, we've done the burials. Lost a little over ninety people. We're still rebuilding everything but with the dragons' help, we're making great progress. We lost about twenty seven or so dragons. I've actually got to go out and help do some rebuilding soon. Your friends are coming over to watch you," Stoick explained softly.

Then Hiccup remembered his uncle. His stomach clenched and it suddenly felt like someone had somehow managed to punch his heart. He winced, casting his gaze to the floor. Toothless crooned softly from behind him on the steps while Stoick placed a hand on his shoulder to let him know it was okay. When Hiccup looked back up, he tried to move on and asked, "Watch me?"

"You've been asleep about two days. I didn't want to leave you here alone with just Toothless while I was out so your friends offered to watch you. Not sure if it's because they care about your or they just didn't want to repair buildings," Stoick mused.

"Mostly the second thing," Astrid announced as she walked in, the others tailing her.

Hiccup wondered how he looked in comparison to his friends. Astrid's bruise was just about faded, but the left side of her face was still just barely yellowed as it was vanishing. Her hair was a disheveled mop on her head and bags were clear under her eyes. She was dirty,

caked in a layer of brown, same as those behind her.

Tuffnut's bruises were much like Astrid's. Yellowed, but nearly gone. His twin sported a long scar along her left cheek. Fishlegs looked almost normal aside from the dirt and the baggy eyes.

Snotlout looked the worse. His hair was so messy that it made Astrid's look combed. His eyes were bloodshot and rimmed with dark purple. His head wasn't bandaged anymore, but his helmet was clearly avoiding the spot where his head had been cracked. He looked tired even without having to glance at his eyes, for his arms hung by his sides limply, his legs seeming almost to shake as if his own weight was too much for him to handle. On his right shoulder, Fang clung to him, pressed close.

"I'm off, then," Stoick announced, shuffling out of the house.

Astrid approached Hiccup slowly, her blue eyes brimming with concern as she looked him over. He was leaning lopsidedly on his right leg, trying to keep most of his weight off of the left. He managed the slightest of smiles as her, glad to see her no matter how rough she looked. When she returned the smile, his heart practically melted and he wanted nothing more than to just hold her close, thanking Odin she was alive.

"You okay, Hiccup?" she asked softly.

He nodded. "Yeah. Getting stabbed isn't the worst thing that's happened to me, I'm sure."

Astrid sighed. "Hiccup, I'm serious."

Hiccup sobered some and narrowed his eyes at her.

"Our homes all got burned down in the fighting. We've had to sleep outside. If it weren't for Stomfly and the others, we'd probably be frozen. Many of our ships are gone and, well, we lost some people..."

Hiccup grimaced. While he had been resting in his own bed in his own home, his friends had been out in the cold, working and suffering. For what he had done. He sucked in a breath and found himself staring down at the ground again, shifting uncomfortably. "I'm sorry."

He felt sick.

"It's okay, Hiccup. This whole thing isn't your fault. Any of us would have probably done the same things you did. Most people probably survived because of you," Astrid tried.

Hiccup looked up. "Yeah, how did I do that?"

"You didn't. Because of you, people are dead, plain and simple," a new voice suddenly cut in.

Snotlout. Hiccup's stomach twisted and he felt a wave of nausea sweep him. He stumbled forward a bit, but Astrid caught and righted him. He heard Toothless come the rest of the way down the stairs, snarling angrily at Snotlout for his tone. The Night Fury glared at him with

narrowed eyes, but Snotlout didn't even waver. Fang, on his shoulder, let out a hiss.

"Snotlout, it wasn't Hiccup's fault," Fishlegs tried to ease him. "It was just bad timing..."

"Yeah, that's helping," Tuffnut scoffed.

Fishlegs looked over him nervously. "Well, I don't see you trying to help!"

"Yeah, I don't do helping. I just stand around and laugh at things that aren't funny. Like this," the boy responded, then punched Ruffnut in the arm and chuckled.

"Ow! Hey!" his sister snarled, turning and delivering a blow upside his head.

Hiccup felt a jab of irritation. He looked at Astrid apologetically before saying, "Can everyone just leave for a minute so Snotlout and I can speak? In private?"

Fishlegs and Astrid were quick to oblige. The twins seemed eager to stick around and watch what happened but were soon yanked away. As the door to Hiccup's home shut, Hiccup wandered over to the steps and sat down, overcome with a weight of wariness. Toothless came and sat at the base of the stairs, sticking near to Hiccup protectively, watching Snotlout with a suspicious gaze. Hiccup reached out scratched Toothless under the chin to ease him. He didn't think his cousin would kill him. Snotlout was just upset. Hiccup knew why.

"Snotlout, I'm—"

"Don't give me that shit," Snotlout cried, wheeling to stare at Hiccup with a furious gaze. His fists clenched and unclenched as he began to pace some, footsteps intentionally hitting the ground hard to help him release some of the pent up frustration. "Look, I'm not mad you helped Alvin train the dragons. I'm only alive because you did that. I'm just... I'm so... I'm angry!"

Hiccup felt his eyes sting as his cousin yelled at him. Hiccup and Snotlout certainly weren't the closest. Especially out of the group. In fact, Hiccup probably got along better with all of the others, even the twins, before he got along with Snotlout. It didn't change the fact that it still hurt to be the reason his kin was upset. He twiddled his fingers, watching the other boy pace for a couple minutes. Snotlout seemed to be searching for words that he couldn't find to express himself.

Hiccup sighed deeply, feeling anguished. "You're angry because I should be dead and not your father."

"Alvin wasn't after my dad! He was after you! Why did my dad have to die to save your ass? Why do me, my mom, and Fang have to suffer because of this? Hell, even Hookfang is distraught and he and my dad hardly spent time with each other," Snotlout screeched, throwing his hands up and nearly knocking Fang off. He reached up and pulled the Terrible Terror close to him. "It's not fair. Why'd my dad have to die? Why wasn't it your dad that went up there to rescue you? Or

Gobber or Phlegma? Why?"

Hiccup shook his head, still sitting on the steps. He was shaking. The boy before him seemed so uncharacteristic of the Snotlout Hiccup was used to. It made it all the more worse to see his cousin like this. This wasn't Snotlout, but because of him, now Snotlout had to feel this way. "I don't know, Snotlout. But without your father and Toothless, I would be dead. All I can say is that your father... my uncle... helped save me. I wish there was something I could do to change the fact that he died."

Snotlout didn't seem satisfied and resumed pacing, his eyes squeezing shut. Fang, in Snotlout's arm, chirped softly before wiggling free, jumping off, and hitting the ground. The little dragon waddled over to Hiccup, passing Toothless who watched with a cautious intensity. The Terror flicked his eyes up at Hiccup before climbing up onto the step that Hiccup was sitting on to stare at him.

"Can you forgive me, Fang?" Hiccup asked, glancing down at the little dragon. "I'm sorry."

The Terrible Terror cooed softly, leaning forward and pressing his muzzle against Hiccup's left leg. He made sure to avoid the wound, but nuzzled ever so gently while Hiccup took a hand and stroked the Terror down along the back, waving among his spines. It made Hiccup feel a bit more at ease to know that at least the dragon forgave him. Maybe that was all Hiccup could ever do. Maybe he could only ever be good with dragons. He sure as heck had a knack for ruining his relationships with people. He prayed he'd never do such a thing with Astrid.

Snotlout looked over as this took place. His facial features seemed to soften at the sight of the Terror forgiving Hiccup. He sighed, feeling his fury fade with the release of breath. His brain, which had gone into overdrive with hatred and venom, began to slow and he was able to look at the picture as a whole.

"I'm sorry, Hiccup."

Words he never thought he'd say in his entire life.

Hiccup looked up, green eyes seeming confused at first as he took in this new information. Toothless looked over as well, blinking and standing to his feet. The Night Fury wandered forward up to Snotlout, who looked dejected, defeated. Toothless nudged him gently and Snotlout reached up to stroke the black dragon's muzzle. He had never really had the chance to touch Toothless before, so he even managed to smile at the new sensation.

"It wasn't your fault that my father died saving you. He was just doing what was right. He was being a good Viking and a good uncle."

Hiccup pulled Fang into his arms and stood. He limped down the steps back to flat ground and over to Snotlout and Toothless. Toothless throatched softly and purred gently as Snotlout gave him a good scratch. It made Hiccup feel content to see Snotlout and Toothless finally having a moment together, finally earning the trust of one another.

"It's not going to be easy, Lout. But know that you got me here to help you on the way," Hiccup smiled, handing Fang back to him.

Snotlout's smile got a twitch bigger, but it was wiped off as the door flung open. Stoick walked back in, tramping across the ground. Astrid, Fishlegs, Ruffnut, and Tuffnut came wandering inside after him, all looking at him with curious gazes. They all gathered around Hiccup, Snotlout, and Toothless, exchanging wary glances and seeming uneasy.

Hiccup took a hobbling step forward, cocking his head as he examined the creases on his father's face. It seemed a mixture of agitation and worry. He glanced back at the others for support. They all just stared at him before motioning him to go forward and ask what was up. Hiccup groaned. He had just gotten over feeling worried about Snotlout's anger. Now he had to face his father's...

"Dad? What's wrong?"

"Hella."

"Hellwha?"

"Hella, Hiccup. She's another outcast, like Alvin. Back before your time. Gobber found this in the Great Hall the other day, but didn't get a chance to read it and forgot about it until now. Alvin must have dropped it," Stoick explained, pulling out a letter and handing it to Hiccup.

Hiccup's fingers took the thin, crisp sheet of paper from his father's hands. He skimmed the contents, eyes narrowing. His heart sunk as he realized what was written down. He tore his eyes back up to his father, biting his bottom lip. "What does this mean?"

"The war isn't over, kids. Sit down. I've got some things I should explain to you all."

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><p>Blood Cry hissed with such a powerful fury that Alvin almost feared his dragon was going to try and kill him for the failure. They had been waiting a couple days now and Blood Cry was getting even more impatient than Alvin was. The person they were waiting for was certainly taking their time to arrive. Since getting back to Outcast Island, Alvin had felt nothing but a deep antagonism for Stoick and Hiccup. Especially Hiccup. How the boy kept escaping death was beyond comprehension as far as Alvin was concerned. It should have been done years ago.</p>

Alvin roared and grabbed a stone resting nearby. He hurled it across the council room, watching it slam against the opposite wall and crumble to pieces. Blood Cry growled in annoyance. The other two dragons that had returned from the battle, the female Nightmare and a Nadder, lowered their heads, thinking that they may feel the brunt of Alvin's anger. Ever since Alvin and Blood Cry had returned to find them and four other men who had made it back, the Nightmare, Nadder, and the men had been the objects of much of Alvin and Blood Cry's wrath for having been cowardly and run away. The men stood lined against a wall as far from Alvin as they could manage.

As Alvin bent for another rock, this one much larger than the last, the men flinched under his dark gaze, which traveled over each of them like a boar searching out the perfect meal. He bounced the stone in right hand, then clutched it, pulling his tense arm back before throwing it forward with a might.

"Where is she?" he howled as the small boulder flew from his grip, soaring through the air and then slamming into the helmet of one of the outcasts.

The man hobbled, dazed from the strike.

A clear cut voice pierced the air like a knife. "Right here."

Alvin spun around to face the newcomer.

She was a large-set woman. Nearly as big as Alvin. Her bright blonde hair was pulled back into a ponytail. The tendrils that hung down were interconnected in a giant, fuzzy mass. Her hazel eyes were sharp, standing out darkly on her pale face. Her high cheekbones and smooth jawline made her almost beautiful, but then her body seemed out of place. She was of a large build, muscular and strong. Though not as chiseled as Alvin, it was obvious that she had fought her way through life as much as he did, if not even more. The callouses on her hands and scars up and down her arms spoke of more tales than she would ever try to recount. She wore an outfit similar to all the women of Berk, a tunic with armor placed over various spots of the body. Her stance spoke clearly the respect she demanded and the strength she wielded. Alvin, though, paid no heed to his and approached her with a red face.

"Hella! What took you so long?"

Hella drew back a hand and slapped Alvin when he tried to shove his face into hers. "If you had read my letter you would have known I wasn't arriving until today. I bet you paid it no mind, did you? You were too hell bent on having your revenge with Stoick and Berk to wait. Now look what's become of your plan. You're down to four men and three dragons. You're the disgrace here. And keep your breath out of my face, you smell of shit."

Alvin seethed, but said nothing.

Hella strode across the room, peering down the men standing to the side and then scanning her gaze over the dragons. She smirked at them before returning her glare to Alvin. "You may have the strength and skill to kill Stoick, but you do not have the strategy or the men."

"What are you suggesting?"

"That we do the plan I had in mind."

Alvin snorted, then chuckled mildly, thinking Hella had just embarrassed herself. "Mind you, Berk isn't as easy to invade as expected. And even if it was, what men would we do this with?"

"Your little mistake actually aids my plan," Hella said coolly.

Alvin narrowed his gaze.

"We're going to have Stoick bring his forces to us. Where we have the upper hand. You've all ready done most of the work to get him angry. A couple more tricks and he'll be here to challenge us before you know it. Then we can kill them all, go back to Berk, and reclaim it for ourselves."

"I repeat, what men would we do this with?"

Hella laughed dryly. "You act as though I've been hiding in a cave all by myself for the past many years. Come, take a look."

Hella waved her hand for Alvin to follow. She strode over to the door leading to the cliffside, yanking it open. She stood and allowed Alvin to leave first, Blood Cry on his heels, interested in what the woman had to offer. Once they were out, she came up alongside them, the bright sunshine glinting off her hair. Her eyes sparked as she looked over at Alvin, whose face broke out into a wicked grin.

"Behold my army," Hella introduced. "Around two hundred and thirty two armed Vikings ready to serve us."

Sure enough, scores of men lined the island with ships docked along the sand. Out in the water, even more floated, men gathered along the decks with catapults and weapons.

Alvin looked over at Blood Cry. "Have any more friends you might want to invite to the party?"

Blood Cry took to the sky.

\* \* \*

><p>HOLY CRUD MUFFINS...</p>

I had worked a wee little bit on this over the weekend. Then I sat down today (Monday for those of you who read this later) and worked on this for about... six hours. SIX HOURS. It still probably had a butt-load of grammar and spelling errors despite rereading it multiple times x3

This was a freakin' long chapter... For me.

Anyways, about Hella (who is an OC), she is not going to take over as the main villain or anything. She will be important to the story, but mostly because she's the reason Alvin has a new army at his disposal. As for who Hella is and where she got the army, that will be answered later.

Blisteria (Snotlout's mother) is technically also an OC as his mother is never named. But she's not very important.

I apologize for Snotlout and Hiccup's extreme OOCness in this chapter. However, I feel it was justified and I hope you all feel the same.

The next chapter is going to be a big flashback, by the way. It will tell Hella and Alvin's backstories. Stoick, Val, Gobber, Spitelout,

Blisteria, Phlegma, and Hoark will all be characters used most in these flashbacks alongside Hella and Alvin.

And as for ninety two Vikings being a third of the fighting forces of Berk... I'm just guessing. In Alvin and the Outcasts, Gobber was remaking weapons and after one he said only... three hundred and forty five to go or something like that... So I just assumed that was the number of Vikings on the island that could fight (excluding elderly, children, etc.).

By the way, I also got a Tumblr. If you want to follow me, I'm Deyoxis. I basically just do HTTYD stuff.

By the way, LOVE that my review count has been increasing with pretty much every chapter since Chapter five. LETS KEEP THAT UP! Review, por favor, but no flames.

Love,

Deyoxis

## 10. The Outcasted

Makes me feel pretty awesome to know that I got away with surprising y'all that Spitelout was the "big" planned death, hehe. Originally it was actually going to be Snotlout... but you'll see why I changed that up in later chapters.

\*\*Pewter:\*\* Haha, thanks xD I was pretty certain it was Fungus, but seeing it Mungus in other stories threw me off.

\*\*EnderMoon:\*\* Aw, thanks so much! And I'm glad you think that way of Hella. I was a bit worried about using her at first, I'm not big on OCs, but I needed someone to help Alvin out after that first battle. Hopefully she'll be an epic side-villain (as stated before, I'm not going to let her overshadow Alvin but she will get more run-time than a background character).

\*\*Just me:\*\* Not sure about the names... Probably because the show has a (for the most part) young audience, so they're sticking to easy names that kids will understand. But I can only guess xD That whole, uh, rant about sides and all just gave me a headache, haha! But I think I get what you're saying. Yeah, I've been thinking about how, eventually, the dragons will probably run into friends/family, but that's part of the reason why I'm trying to not let this story turn into an extremely extended war or anything. And I've limited the outcasts' dragons to smaller numbers so that it's less likely... But maybe I could throw one in for a twist? I'll think about it since I'm not fully done with the outline of the second battle, yet. And maybe I will do a Hiccup and Spitelout story one day 8D As for Fang, I figured that he has a small inkling (it's kind of hard not to see that Snotlout was mad at Hiccup) of what happened, but not completely. However, dogs and cats have a very short grudge-range so I figured Fang could kind of represent that, too. To help show Snotlout it's not all about being angry, but forgiving. And, uhm, wow... I think I covered all your questions/comments... I think xD

\*\*Super shout outs of thanks to my other reviewers, KaliAnn,

LifeAfterYou21, SonicBeastHedgehog, Anony Mouse, storygirl, and NadderWolf. Also to my Anons and Guest reviewers! (:\*\*

As said before, this is a flashback chapter (sort of a double flashback... first one from their teen years and second from when Hiccup was five years old).

Valhallarama is in it, as well as many of the other adults. I don't know exactly what they were like as teens so just keep in mind that this is all my own imagination. I am writing this for FANFICTION after all, haha. The only characters I even somewhat own are Blisteria, Hella, and Blood Cry. And normally I try not to be lazy and I write out full names (Ruffnut as opposed to just Ruff), but Val's name is too complicated... So I'm afraid I might just be writing Val most of the time...

Also, a quick note... Though in the TV show and based off the story in Legend of the Boneknapper, it seems as if Gobber almost didn't come to Berk until he was older (Stoick said the first thing he said to Gobber was, "That's my wife you're talking to" so they were obviously older)... I'm going to ignore that.

Sorry, last thing... I apologize for the length it took to write this. I had two papers to write for classes and they sort of killed my creativity for a bit. This chapter might be messy but I'll be back in the swing of it soon!

\*\*Chapter Ten: The Outcasted\*\*

"Stop it, Stoick! Ah, let go of my head!"

"What's wrong, Spite? Can't face the fierceness of the head noogie?"

Spitelout flailed his arms, his head locked in the curve of Stoick's left elbow. The elder of the two was rubbing his fist vigorously over the top of Spitelout's head, messing up his dark hair and causing his younger brother to wince in pain. Stoick was only older by four years, being eighteen to Spitelout's fourteen, but Spitelout was still nearly his size as both trained together constantly. Even though they looked evenly matched, Stoick was the stronger of the two, and trapping his poor brother in a noogie was a favorite pastime of his.

Spitelout tried to pull his head free. "I'd rather face a couple Deadly Nightmares!"

Stoick released his brother and Spitelout stumbled back. The younger boy reached up and rubbed the top of his head tenderly, groaning softly. It was sore now, throbbing dully along the top of his skull. He tried to comb some of his short black strands to the side, but now they were caught in a tangled mass.

"Look what you did to my hair, Stoick."

Stoick boomed a laughter, shaking his head at his brother and turning to lead the way out of the house. They had just finished breakfast and had the day off from training. Their father had all ready left for the day to go about his chiefly duties. Their mother was cleaning the plates up. She glanced over at them as they made their way from

the house, calling back goodbyes to her as they stepped out into the open.

The sunlight sparkled against the layer of snow that spread out across the land before them. The brilliant white crystals gleamed with such an intensity that it nearly blinded Stoick and Spitelout as they stepped out from the darkness of their house. Spitelout rubbed his eyes, feeling them ache with the sheer beauty of the outside world. Although snow for Berk was as common as Blacksmiths with fires burning, it still gave an ethereal feeling to the village. So long as it wasn't a blizzard. Today was no exception, with rooftops blending in to their surroundings, people treading about, and yet, the sun raining down its light as if attempting to drive away the cold, but failing. The sound of the ocean was even audible through the soft quietness of the village, like it was hushed due to the weight of the frozen landscape.

The soft crunching of feet stepping along the path at the bottom of their front yard made Stoick and Spitelout turn to peer at who it was. Dark brown hair was pulled back into a ponytail. A couple loose strands of bangs hung down around the smooth face of Valhallarama, her eyes staring at the path beneath her feet to make sure she wouldn't slip. Though sweet with a smile and lips that seemed they never frowned, the girl was muscular for a female. Despite this display of power from her body, she still had the curves of a woman and truly was stunning to behold. She was also Stoick's girlfriend.

"Val!" Stoick called, waving his right hand up in the air to catch her attention.

Val's head snapped up and she squinted at them from below. She had known who it was from as soon as she heard the voice, but she still looked up at them with a quiet intensity, as if gauging them. Stoick's strong body and thickening beard, which was growing larger by the day and Spitelout's mop of hair and stubble made them seem almost like opposites just by looks. She smiled after only a couple seconds and returned the wave by shaking her fishing rod in the air, signaling them that they were welcome to join her.

Stoick nodded and darted back inside. He returned in a flash, gripping his own rod and Spitelout's. He tossed his brother's at him and Spitelout just managed to catch it. He breathed with relief that he didn't break it in his mad attempt to grasp it, but then noticed that Stoick had all ready made it to the bottom of the hill and was greeting Val once more. Spitelout looked from the spot where Stoick was just standing to where he was then and blinked. Since when could his brother move so fast?

Stumbling down to the two, he wandered up with a goofy grin on his face, watching his older brother converse with his sweetheart always made Spitelout's heart melt because the two were so cute together... in that large Viking sort of way. Val was chuckling lightly at something Stoick had said.

"Laughing? You must be more in love than I thought if you actually think Stoick is funny," Spitelout teased.

Stoick snatched up Spitelout's helmet and scooped snow into it before jamming it back down on his brother's head. Spitelout cried out in

alarm, feeling the slush hit the top of his head. He winced from the chill but then laughed. "You know, that makes my head feel better from your noogie!"

Val raised an eyebrow at Stoick. "You still give him noogies?"

"He's my brother," Stoick shrugged. "Anyways, where we off to?"

"Black Heart Bay. I'm meeting Blisteria, Hoark, and Phlegma there, but the more the merrier."

"Really then? Let me go fetch Gobber. I bet he'd like to join us."

Val smiled gently. "I can't believe we didn't think to ask him."

"I can't believe you didn't ask us," Stoick jabbed.

"Maybe I was on my way up to do that."

Spitelout shoved his way in between the two. "Sure didn't look that way."

Val winked. "Guess you'll never know now, will you?"

This response left both Stoick and Spitelout a little frustrated, not that the real answer mattered much, anyways. Even if Val wasn't going to invite them, that didn't suddenly change their whole friendship or anything. No, they'd be friends for years to come, they all knew that. Being enemies would be too much trouble since the island was so small. Plus, they all ready had their enemies. Speaking of which...

"I'm going to go ask Hella if she'd like to join," Spitelout announced.

Val and Stoick groaned, casting each other wary glances. Val gave Stoick a look that seemed to say 'stop your brother' and Stoick was quick to jump on it, turning to Spitelout and demanding why he would ask the she-devil.

Spitelout frowned. "She's my friend."

That was a hard statement to argue. Just because Stoick, Val, and the whole rest of the village didn't like the girl, there wasn't much they could do to stop Spitelout from being her friend. Feeling defeated, Stoick grumbled into the air, his beard quivering with the slight anger at being unable to stop his brother from asking the female to join them. Hopefully, if they were lucky, she would be busy with anything else.

"I'll go get Gobber," Stoick announced, then went off to fetch his friend.

Spitelout went in another direction, heading to Hella's house. As he neared it, he gazed the building over. Recently rebuilt from a dragon attack, it was made of fresh wood and currently held no scorch marks. It seemed almost perfect next to the rest of the houses. He tapped on the door, knowing it didn't take much for anyone to hear when their

door's were being knocked on. Most houses only had about three or four rooms, after all.

The door creaked open and Hella's father peered out. His eyes settled on Spitelout, looking almost threatening. He snarled, moving away from the door and pounding into the shadows. Hella appeared a moment later, seeming puzzled before she noticed who it was. Seeing Spitelout, she smiled gently, her normally rigid face relaxing. Spitelout felt a twinge of sorrow for the girl. No one else knew what he did about her. Or, to be more precise, about her father. The man was a cruel brute, merciless. He pushed Hella harder than Spitelout and Stoick's father had ever even considered pushing them... and he pushed them to some pretty harsh limits. He wanted her to become the chief's wife which meant he was constantly screaming at her to get with Stoick and remove Val from the picture. Hella refused. She didn't love Stoick.

Spitelout had come close to wanting to tell his father or Stoick or someone about Hella's predicament. He knew she wouldn't take kindly to that, though. She had told him plenty that she wanted to get through this herself and that she would be fine. She didn't want his pity or anyone's pity. So Spitelout held back, thinking that maybe one day she'd realize what needed to be done.

"We're going fishing. Want to come?" he finally asked.

Hella's hazel eyes trained back inside the house. She seemed to be scoping something out before they stopped, clearly finding what she was looking for. She turned back to him and nodded before slipping into the darkness of the room, leaving Spitelout standing out on the porch in the brightness of day. When she returned, she held up her fishing pole to show him what she had gone to retrieve.

They left, not saying anything more to each other, heading to the trail to meet back up with Val and Stoick.

\* \* \*

><p>"Isn't it a bit too cold for fish?" Phlegma asked, staring into the crystal waters of Black Heart Bay like the answer was hiding within the watery depths.</p>

Val laughed. "Fish around here are used to cold. Plus, it's only the start of the worst season of winter, meaning the water hasn't gotten as cold as the air yet."

Phlegma knelt down and dipped a finger in the water. She pulled it back out like lightning, yelping. "It's freezing!"

Everyone chuckled, Hoark reaching into the fish basket next to him and chucking a fish at her. It smacked her in the back of the head before sliding down her neck, its slime rubbing off into her hair and on her skin. She snatched it off and wheeled around, dropping her fishing rod and tossing the fish back. Hoark, who had been too busy laughing to notice her reaction, was soon wiping the slime of the fish off his face before picking it up from the ground to put it back in the basket. He spat out some of the goo with disgust, shaking his head.

"I suppose I deserved that," he stated.

Phlegma winked before getting back to fishing.

Gobber, Stoick, and Val were sitting off to the side, taking a break. So far they had been the only ones to even catch any fish. Hoark didn't have a fishing rod so he guarded the baskets while Phlegma, Blisteria, Spitelout, and Hella continued to try and reel something in. Nothing. Spitelout groaned in obvious frustration, his eyes hardening as he looked at the water.

"This is dumb," Hella grunted.

For once, she had people agreeing with her.

The bay rippled, water sloshing along the edges of the shore. The land was quiet aside from the plunging of the waterfall. It caused a cool, misty spray to settle over the area, chilling the teens despite them being used to the familiar cold. The sunlight jumped about from all the drops in the air like it was searching for the perfect spot to sit but just couldn't stay still. It made the bay look like it was glowing. The air was moist from the spray, yet dry to the throat because of the frigid temperature. Shivers rippled up and down the spines of the teens who were starting to wrack their brains for a warmer idea.

Footsteps approaching from up the path caught their attention and heads craned to see who was coming. As soon as the figure was in sight, a collective groan rose up from among the teens. They all tried to refocus their attention elsewhere, but the newcomer was determined to not be ignored.

"You are all idiots. Why you're fishing right now I'll never know. You could be doing something more productive. Like training to fight dragons even on our day off. Like me," Alvin smirked, flexing his right arm and grinning stupidly.

No one was impressed.

Alvin was small. He was only a bit bigger than what one might consider a hiccup. He wasn't muscular was his main problem. He was, all in all, just a rather wimpy looking boy. He showed signs of potential but, for now, he just looked average. Hoark, who was the smallest of the men gathered at about one third Stoick's size, looked like he could take the other boy out with his pinky. He hadn't even started showing facial hair and he was sixteen. A late bloomer, some tried to say. Stoick and the others just said he deserved to be pathetic since his attitude was so rotten.

"Go away, Alvin. No one invited you," Gobber groaned, falling onto his back to stare up at the sky.

Val looked over with a look of disinterest, "You don't look like you're training to fight dragons right now."

"Well, I was," Alvin retorted, placing his fists on his hips and trying to peer down smugly at Val.

Blisteria sighed, speaking up for the first time in a while, "Well then go back to it and leave us to do what we want to do."

"Fishing? You've caught, what, one barrel of fish? It's past midday all ready, you're helping no one you idiots."

"I'd appreciate it if you stopped calling us idiots," Spitelout tried to put in.

Alvin sauntered on up to Spitelout, who was still fishing. Putting on a pouty face, Alvin proceeded to whine, "Aw, did I hurt the little Spitey Witey's feelings?"

"Shut up, Alvin, before I hurt something of yours," Hella threatened, her voice slipping through the air like ice. Her eyes were narrowed and they seemed almost to darken despite the blinding daylight.

Alvin backed away some, throwing up his hands as if in defense. "So you'll all invite the beast but you won't invite me?"

"Thought you were too cool to go fishing?" Hoark challenged.

"Hella isn't a beast," Spitelout snapped, tossing his rod to the side and spinning to face Alvin completely.

Spitelout could see fear ebb in Alvin's eyes. The boy knew full well that he was no match for anyone there and that he was starting to push his luck. He seemed to enjoy annoying everyone to their breaking points, however, and since he still hadn't gotten Phlegma, Gobber, Stoick, Blisteria, and Val riled up enough, he decided to keep going. He moved to a safe distance away from Spitelout before shrugging his shoulders and pretending to be gazing at clouds in the sky that didn't exist. "That's not what everyone else says."

Hella snarled, now tossing her own rod to the side. It clattered along the hard dirt bank of the shore. She started to march towards Alvin but Spitelout reached out and held her firm, trying to keep her from doing something she'd regret. As much as he wanted to turn Alvin inside out, he knew their father wouldn't approve of any of them beating up the weaker boy.

Realizing he had this won, Alvin meandered over to Stoick, Val, and Gobber seated on the ground.

"Hey, Val. You still dating that guy? Why? He's dumber than an ox."

Stoick jumped to his feet, fists tightening. He towered over Alvin, who did his best not to flinch away. Leaning in close to Alvin's face, Stoick chuckled. "If you're the smart one here, why are you making such poor choices? Why, when I'm chief, no puny runt like you will exist in this village, especially not one with a mouth like yours."

"Alvin, just go home," Blisteria suggested calmly, trying to regain a sense of reasonableness among the group.

Alvin seethed. "What if I don't want to? Maybe I want to stay here!"

"Well then I guess we're leaving. Lets go take the fish back," Gobber announced, standing to his feet and stretching out, cracking his

knuckles.

Alvin was about to scream. His face heated to such a point that he looked like lava would come spewing out of his eats. As far as anyone was concerned he had always been a jerk. It was probably because he felt the need to prove himself, being smaller, but his way of proving himself was more annoying to everyone else than it was to helping his cause. In fact, most of the time, it just made people look even lower upon him. His personality was what got him hated in the town as opposed to Hella, who was just known to have a rather bestial temper. While no one necessarily wanted to put up with her, they could. Alvin? No one ever wanted to.

Hoark lugged the basket up. Stoick started to lead the way back towards the village, Val and Gobber falling into step alongside him. Hoark and Phlegma filed behind them while Spitelout, Blisteria, and Hella took the rear. Alvin stood fuming for a couple minutes before charging after them. He came up along behind them and started cursing hotly at them all. No one paid him any mind, delving into their own conversations.

Hella couldn't seem to take it. Her anger kicked in at one point and she suddenly halted, spinning around, kicking up dirt. Her blond hair whipped around, nearly smacking Spitelout in the face as he turned to see what was happening. Before he could register anything, he saw Hella's fist hit Alvin in the stomach. The boy gasped from the loss of breath and pain before toppling backwards. He clutched his abdomen, wincing wildly as he sucked back in oxygen.

"Hella!" Stoick roared, wheeling about and charging to her. He stepped in front of her, green eyes blazing with a fury. "You shouldn't have done that!"

"So?" Hella asked snidely.

Stoick growled lowly. "You will never hurt a fellow villager without good reason. Not in my father's tribe and certainly not in mine!"

"I think him being annoying was good enough reason."

"Yes, he is annoying, but that isn't how you handle those kinds of situations."

"You don't control me, Stoick," Hella muttered darkly.

Stoick shifted and when he spoke, his words dripped of a venom that made Spitelout's heart sink. "Not yet."

Stoick shouldered his way back to the lead.

"Stoick, wait," Spitelout tried to talk to his brother, but the older boy refused and just went on.

The others followed diligently. Blisteria cast Spitelout a sorrowed glance before she hurried to keep up. Spitelout turned to Hella, his stomach clenching as he looked at his friend. He then glanced at Alvin, who was still writhing about on the ground. After a couple moments, the boy regained himself and he stumbled to his feet before taking off in a sprint to avoid anything else Hella might have for him.

Spitelout and Hella then walked on together, Spitelout searching for the words to try and ease Hella. He had done it once before. That was how he got her to admit to him about everything that happened with her father. It was how they had become relatively stable friends. He couldn't seek anything out, however, and so he just trudged alongside her in quietness. The sun was sinking and, as evening approached, the light of the snow began to dim and shadows began to crawl their way around. By the time they reached the village, the sky was pale, the light just below the horizon, and stars dotted the night expanse.

Then a roar laced its way through the buildings. People stopped what they were doing and the teens all froze in their tracks, huddling together as they looked up into the air in search of the source. Eyes narrowed and bodies tensed, hair standing on end. Spitelout felt a ripple of fear pass through Blisteria, who was next to him since he and Hella had caught up. The girl was a year younger and the newest in the dragon fighting class with Hoark. She shuffled closer to Spitelout and he glanced at her face, which seemed nervous.

"Children! Get to your posts, it's a raid!" a sudden cry emitted.

A shriek burst through the air and fire exploded around them.

\* \* \*

><p>Stoick grabbed his brother and Blisteria. He dashed across the land, pulling them along behind him. He pulled them into the Blacksmith's workshop. Gobber joined them only a moment after with Hoark. They all ducked under a table as fire came raining down in streams. The chaos broke out in those moments and the teens found it easier to wait until something was organized before they were supposed to go about trying to put out fires.</p>

"Where's Val, Phlegma, Alvin, and Hella?" Blisteria asked.

Stoick didn't even look at her as he spoke, his eyes unmoving from the sky. "They went to get our buckets."

Vikings charged back and forth, screeching battle cries and waving weapons in the air. Dragons cried out into the air, the world burning with noise from all around. Fire spread along the land, igniting anything that stood in its path.

The teens peered through the rising smoke and fiery glaze to try and find the other teens. Soon, four forms came bumbling on over, carrying empty pails. One of Alvin's toppled to the ground but Val, who had been ushering them all along from behind, scooped down and hoisted it under her left arm with surprising grace.

Stoick, Spitelout, Blisteria, Gobber, and Hoark crawled out and raced out to meet their friends, accepting their tools. They moved as a mass to the giant barrel that was filled with water and began to fill their buckets one at a time. At some point during the chaos, Hella hid her bucket and then slipped into the madness. Only Stoick noticed and he watched her vanish with narrowed eyes, suspicion whispering softly to him to follow her. So he did.

"Spite, I'll be right back," Stoick informed his brother, knowing that Spitelout would be the one to not question him.

He was right and Spitelout said nothing, just nodded and began to lug his water off to the nearest fire.

Stoick struggled to find Hella again. By the time he did, he would regret having not found her sooner. He watched as she ran up to a child who was trying to get home. The kid, caught off guard, didn't even have time to protest as Hella scooped him up, pretending to be taking him to safety. At first, Stoick thought this was what she was doing, but he was proven wrong. She was pounding on over to a house that a Hideous Zippleback was crawling over. The two headed creature had one head sticking inside a window, obviously searching for anything of interest. Hella yanked open the front door and then slung the kid inside with a mighty force. Stoick could hear the kid's scream of distress from where he stood and his heart jumped to his throat.

Hella called out to someone, her father. She pointed into the house and stepped back as the man jogged over and looked inside. He must have seen the kid because he ducked inside in a hurry. Hella glanced around, eyes scanning the world about her with a dark glow, then took that moment to get away. Stoick, fear running through his body, tried to kick himself into motion, thinking maybe there was something he could do. In the back of his mind, he knew quite well that there was nothing. He watched green smoke come shooting out the door and windows, the head that sprayed the gas yanking out. The other head sparked, flames dancing from between its teeth and around its tongue.

Just one spark, and the house shattered.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hella," the chief bellowed as the village gathered around.</p>

Stoick stood before his father, downcast from what he had witnessed. He had to tell his father. He couldn't let Hella get away with what she did. So as soon as the battle was over, he had found his father and spilled everything he had seen. He had been scared to do it. He was accusing Hella of treason and he didn't have much proof outside of his word. If she continually denied it and no one else had noticed then Stoick would be shamed upon and Hella would probably try to exact her revenge on him for trying to get her in trouble.

Hella approached. Her face was ashen from the battle. It hadn't lasted long and so the night sky still hung over the village like an umbrella. The people gathered around looked eerie as torches were the only things shedding light now in the dead of the night. Grim faces smeared with black, wounds and cuts dripping crimson blood, and the quietness of the people created an atmosphere of cold reality. Hella stood before the chief.

Stoick's father was breathing heavily, clearly enraged. While Hella had always been brutal and mean, no one, not even the chief, had ever expected to hear her doing of such a thing. She had always at least seemed trustworthy and loyal to the village. The man glanced at Stoick and then found Spitelout, who was standing a ways off,

surrounded by Gobber, Val, Phlegma, Hoark, Alvin, and Bisteria. The face of Stoick's brother looked concerned and upset, wondering why Hella was being called forth in front of the entirety of the village. Stoick almost felt bad to be doing this only because his brother trusted her.

"Hella, did you throw a child into a home being attacked by a Zippleback?"

No response. Hella didn't even flinch.

"Did you then call your dad over to go in and retrieve the child?"

Still nothing. The village was now murmuring softly, surprise at the accusations clear in the reactions of the people.

"Hella, if you don't have anything to say I can't do anything but charge you for treason," the chief muttered.

Hella's eyes widened with a sudden fear as she seemed to finally recognize the situation she was in. The fear vanished in a split second, however, only to be replaced with a pure hatred. An anger so clear that it baffled Stoick upon seeing it. She stepped forward, stomping heavily on the ground with one foot before finally giving her say, "He deserved it!"

"Who deserved it?" the chief asked.

Hella laughed in despair like it should have been obvious. "My father! That damn man had it coming to him! Do you know what he did to me?"

Now the chief remained silent.

"He beat me. He wanted me to marry your son, Stoick. When I refused he beat me some more. He pushed me to do things I doubt even you have tried. I should be dead. If it wasn't for that wretched man deciding to spare my life at the last second, I would be nothing but a body buried in the earth right now."

"Your father was one of my best men," the chief reminded her.

Hella wheeled around to face Spitelout. "Tell your father. Tell him!"

Spitelout looked at her with an expression of flabbergasted. He seemed to pale and he took a step back like he was finally seeing a monster for the first time. He glanced at the people beside him and then turned to his father. Spitelout nodded slightly in agreement to Hella's words, but his feelings didn't seem genuine.

"Spite, what are you doing?" Hella questioned, voice seeming to crack with a sudden new feeling- betrayed.

Spitelout looked at her. His eyes cut deep with hurt and he seemed to deflate as he spoke to her. "Your father was a horrible man, Hella. But that doesn't justify murder... especially not to an innocent child."

That was the deal breaker. No one could argue. Especially once that parents of the child were found. Their cries sounded hollow in the empty air as they grieved over the loss of their son. They screeched at Hella in agony, demanding to know why she would do such a thing to get rid of her father. The chief frowned at her and shook his head. He informed her quietly that she should have approached him and not have kept it a secret. They could have solved it. It was too late now. The deed was done.

Hella was banished from the island.

Spitelout stood at the docks, watching the tiny boat she was allowed to take drifting away. They had forced her to leave almost immediately, but it had taken the rest of the night to gather food and what was left of her belongings so that she wasn't just sent straight to her death. Stoick came up alongside him, watching the form vanishing through the fog of morning rolling over the sweeping sea. He apologized softly, placing a hand on his brother's shoulder, but knew it wouldn't help.

Spitelout hadn't loved Hella. But he had cared for her as a friend. He had only wished she would have seen others that same way.

\* \* \*

><p>"Stoick."</p>

Stoick stood, turning to see who had addressed him. It was a bland day. The clouds were drawn over the sky like a curtain, hiding the sun from view and giving the world a grey look. Everything seemed to hold an essence of shadow to it, seeming much darker than it normally was. It spoke forebodingly of a raid. Stoick couldn't help but believe that the sinking feeling in the back of his stomach about it was true. He felt the need to get prepared. He'd been commanding orders all morning left and right. He could tell many of the others were getting annoyed, but he continued to persist. Val had sought him out and tried to soothe him, but he was too antsy. He hadn't been a chief for long and the first couple raids under his rule hadn't gone as well as he hoped. His tactics weren't turning out quite like he planned, but now he felt he finally had it down.

"Gobber, good to see you," Stoick breathed, a rush of relief escaping his lips to see his friend. "The weapons are ready?"

Gobber nodded, the blacksmith smiling, his fake tooth flashing at Stoick. "Everything's good to go."

"The torches?"

"Ready to be lit."

Stoick grinned with pleasure. "Excellent. I needed some good news."

"What's the bad news?"

"Our houses will still burn down if fire hits them, Alvin's being his typical horrible self, and people are sick of me telling them things to do."

Gobber blinked, "What all could you possibly be having them do?"

"Setting up traps, getting supplies, fishing, making sure kids are prepared..."

Gobber shook his head at his friend. His eyes rolled though Stoick didn't see, the man turning and pacing about. He stopped suddenly, looking up and snapping his head around. "Where's Spite?"

"I think he went to check up on Blisteria, Val, and the children," Gobber mused.

Stoick stalked past Gobber brusquely. The wind of the chief moving by Gobber made his mustache sway and he reached up to steady the tendrils before sighing. Stoick was more uptight than he had ever seen the man. Everyone trusted him as a leader, he had proven himself, but he was determined that nothing he had done was good enough so far. If only the man would see that everything would be all right. Even his son... hopefully.

"Val!" Stoick called when he saw his wife, marching over to her.

The woman turned, tilting her head just enough to see Stoick approaching. She sighed warily, hearing the agitation in his voice but confused as to why. She turned to fully face him, clutching their son close to her. The boy pouted and then grumbled something under his breath as the man approached. Val knew instantly that her son was worried that Stoick was coming to yell at him. It seemed a tradition and Hiccup had grown used to the tone of voice Stoick would have when he was agitated with him. Only five years old and he all ready understood his father's anger more than his love. It made Val's heart break.

Setting Hiccup down, Val looked over to her husband. "What is it, Stoick?"

"Where's Spite?"

Val was relieved. So Stoick wasn't mad at Hiccup. She couldn't determine why he could have possibly been mad at the boy when he hadn't even tried anything today. So far...

"I don't know, Stoick. He was here a couple of minutes ago but he took Blisteria and Snotlout off. Maybe they went home."

"He's supposed to be gathering the men," Stoick grunted.

Val folded her arms, narrowing her eyes at the chief. "Stoick, raids aren't until night, you know that. We've had only two in all of Berk's history happen during the day. There's still a couple hours before the sun even touches the horizon. You need to relax."

"I can't, Val, I feel it in my gut. Something is going to happen."

"Maybe you just need to sneeze."

Stoick didn't seem too fond of the joke. His attention snapped to her, looking aggravated. His fingers curled as he tried to search for

words to say as opposed to smashing his fist on the nearest object. He reached up and grabbed at his massive beard, feeling the strands slip under his fingernails as he clenched at it to rid himself of some of the anger. After a couple deep breaths, he centered himself and released his beard. "I'm serious, Val..."

Val's face fell. She had been trying to convince herself for a majority of the day that Stoick was just seeming paranoid, but perhaps he was on to something. She had never seen him quite as fidgety as he was right now and it was starting to get to her, she didn't want him to feel the way he was right now. If what he was feeling was correct, though, then maybe they all needed to be a bit more serious right now. So she sucked down a breath and nodded, turning and bending down to Hiccup.

"Hiccup, why don't you head on home now," she suggested softly, trying on a sweet smile.

Hiccup seemed confused. The small boy cocked his head, squinting his eyes at his mother. They were a bright green, like his father's. His mussy hair was red tinged, but would grow more brown as he got older, she could tell. He was scrawny, though. Nothing like her and Stoick. It pained to admit to herself but she was even smaller than even Alvin had been at this age. That didn't bode well. In fact, Alvin was on top of making sure Stoick understood this. Though the man was no longer the little wimp he once was. Over the years, something must have happened or his training finally kicked in for him because now he was only a little bit smaller than Stoick. He couldn't take on the man, yet, but he had become powerful. Val couldn't help but feel, looking at her son, that he wouldn't be able to become strong like Alvin somehow had managed. He pursed his lips, then asked, "Why?"

Val chuckled softly as if he had said something funny, only causing him to look even more puzzled. She reached out, turning him around with her hands and pushing him in the direction of the house. "Just go, son. Wait there and don't you leave. Do. Not. Leave. Do you understand me?"

Hiccup looked over his shoulder, sucking his upper lip in as he fought to keep the protests from coming out. Instead, he finally nodded, "Yes, mom."

As the little boy started towards the house, Val stood back up straight and looked over at Stoick with a firm gaze. He smiled a thanks, making her feel a little bit lighter knowing she had made him even the slightest bit happier. She motioned for him to follow her and they started to head to Spitelout's house. As they moved through the village, she watched people rushing this way and that. Spitelout lived in a house not far off from their's, in the center of the village. Stoick was chief, so he kept the chief house on the hill, but his brother was nearby just in case anything was needed. Gobber, too.

Stoick rapped on the door, then waited. After a couple seconds, the door swung open and Spitelout stood in the doorway, blinking. When he saw his brother and Val, he grinned, welcoming them inside.

Stoick waved a hand.

"No, Spite, I thought I told you to get the men ready. What are you doing here?" Stoick demanded.

Spitelout wasn't phased at all by the soft dripping of anger in Stoick's voice. He snorted softly, leaning against the doorframe and shaking his head. "I told them all to be prepared, but most of them went off laughing. Raids don't happen until night, Stoick."

Stoick's gaze found its way to the clouds as a low rumble skidded over them. He narrowed his eyes, face tightening. Val and Spitelout trained their eyes the same way, knowing that it couldn't have possibly been thunder. Stoick stepped off from the porch, still looking up. Val and Spitelout joined him and the three stood at the base of the steps leading to Spitelout's house, staring up in confusion. Another rumble, louder, but seeming to echo. Like multiple growls at once.

"That's not thunder," Val muttered.

Spitelout's face paled and Stoick turned to face him with a half look of triumph while the other half was grim.

"Dragons!" Spitelout breathed, turning and running up into the house. "Blisteria, get Snotlout to safety! We're having a day raid!"

He didn't wait to hear Blisteria's response, turning and fleeing towards the village to gather the men while Stoick pounded after him. Val took a couple steps in the other direction, then turned and peered up towards her own home. "Hiccup!"

She fled up the hill and threw open the door. She gazed around, but the house was empty. Only the shriek of a dragon responded to her cry. She turned and bolted back down the steps, heading for the Blacksmith's shop, which just so happen to be run by Gobber. Hiccup had grown a liking to the place and was constantly there messing around with tools and whatnot. Hopefully, since he had clearly disobeyed her orders, he had decided to go and see Gobber. She approached the shop as the man was pulling out a large wagon of weapons. People were beginning to gush around the village, seeking out axes and swords. She shoved through a couple, then met eyes with Gobber. Her heart clenched with worry, but he nodded and motioned his head towards the building just as the first dragon came swooping down from the clouds, eyes blazing.

Inside, Val found Hiccup sitting near the fireplace, fitting a stone into a band.

"Hiccup! How dare you disobey me! Come now, lets get back to the house. The center of the village is no place for you right now," she commanded, bending down to try and pick him up.

Hiccup rolled from her grasp and stood, holding up his possession like a prize. He was grinning, his funny little grin so cheery on his face despite the battle breaking out just outside.

"Look! I made a weapon I can use against the dragons! I can help you fight, mom! See! I don't need to be big and strong!"

Val looked at the little slingshot in his hands. That thing only had enough firepower to probably crush a couple bugs. A dragon would

barely feel it. She almost laughed at his cute attempt to join the fight, but held it back. She needed to show him this was serious. Bending down, she shook her head, grabbing his shoulders with her hands. "No, Hiccup. Even if you were as big as Snotlout, you're still too young to fight. Not even he can, yet, okay. One day but not today."

The five year old seemed to grow older in those moments. "You don't think I'll even be able to fight dragons."

"Hiccup, I strongly believe you have the power to change lives. But the day for you to use that power is not today. One day, sweetie, please."

Hiccup resigned himself and let Val lift him up. She burst out of the Blacksmith shop and began to dodge her way through the fire and people to get Hiccup to a safer place. The dragons hardly ever went for their house on the hill and, even if they did, Hiccup knew the escape route to take so she felt more comfortable with him there. She didn't count on him still planning on defeating a dragon before the day was done.

She held him in a way that allowed him freedom to move his arms. He crawled up, able to lean his body over her shoulder, holding himself by pressing his torso close. He held up the slingshot, squinting his eyes, tongue sticking out slightly as he shifted his aim around. Upon spotting a Gronckle about to zip nearby, he released the tension of the band he was holding back. The thing snapped and the rock went sailing. Only it wasn't near powerful enough to reach the Gronckle.

Instead, it ended up smacking a Viking male who was getting ready to throw a bola. Caught off guard, he slung it in the wrong direction. Hiccup watched it sail overhead and Val came to stop, letting out a groan when she realized what just happened. She let Hiccup twist in her arms to watch the weapon head straight for one of the catapults just at the edge of the village center. Val couldn't even have her eyes open as the weapon made a collision. It wasn't big enough to knock out the catapult or anything, but it knocked the current projectile's direction off course. The large boulder took to the air, blending in with the grey sky before drilling down into a house, splintering it before it burst through to hit another house and then settled.

Hiccup sat in his mother's arms, eyes wide and mouth slightly agape, unable to figure out what had just gone wrong with his plan. Val, meanwhile, didn't need to have her eyes open to hear Stoick.

"Hiccup!"

The little boy ducked down, burying his face in his mother's shoulder. That wasn't even the end. The whole ordeal seemed to have grabbed the attention of most of the villagers. In that moment, the dragons took their chance, sweeping up sheep and cattle before bursting into the air, crying out triumphantly and vanishing into the thick smoke of the clouds.

Stoick was charging towards them, face red and ears nearly releasing streams of steam. His nostrils flared as he approached, trying to

contain his anger, but it wasn't working. He stopped a couple feet away, pacing back and forth for a moment before stopping and glaring down at his son, who feebly looked up from his mother's shoulder.

"Stoick," Val said softly, eyes opening and begging for her husband to relax.

Stoick seemed to find some sort of solace in Val's creamy eyes and the tension in his body seemed to melt away. "Hiccup, what did you do?"

"I was just trying to help—"

"That was not the way to help, Hiccup."

"But I can help you guys fight dragons," Hiccup whined.

Stoick seethed, "Hiccup, you're five, you're not old enough."

"Well if I don't prove it to you now I'll never get to help! I hear you and Uncle talking. You don't think I will ever be a Viking."

Val's heart broke. She couldn't believe her five year old son would feel and know such things. She bit her lip, feeling as if a chill was lacing through the air. Did the clouds grow darker?

Stoick seemed just as taken aback. His heavy breathing echoed through the air as villagers began to peek over. Gobber slowly approached, worried he was interfering in something. But he was suddenly shoved out of the way as a new figure appeared. A bulky man with a growing black beard and dark, hatred filled eyes. Alvin sneered and came up to Stoick, laughing.

"Not going to let a bunch of puny runts grow up in your village, are you?" Alvin laughed. "What do you call your son, Stoick?"

"Shut up, Alvin," Stoick commanded, poison dripping in his tone.

Alvin refused, "You have made the biggest mistake of your life, Stoick. You're nothing but a hypocrite. You curse me for years when I was a weakling, wanting me gone, and now you won't do it when you actually have the power to get rid of the little spit!"

"Alvin," Val growled, surprised the man would suggest such a thing. Hiccup shivered in her arms.

"Alvin, he is my son," Stoick hissed.

Alvin stomped the ground, "So just because he's your son he gets special rights? That doesn't seem fair, Stoick."

Stoick didn't have anything to respond, though his mouth hung open with the urge to say something.

Alvin began to laugh. "There's only one way to fix this, Stoick. You need to hold true to your word. Your son's a puny wimp. He needs to die."

Gobber stepped forward now and Stoick moved in front of Val and Hiccup. The air seemed to freeze. No breeze stirred and silence enveloped the world as the last of the fires were put out. It seemed the clouds even shaded more, the shadows deepening on the faces of the people gathered in the center village.

Alvin threw the first punch. Stoick just managed to hold up an arm to take the brute of the force. He launched his own swipe back at the man. It collided with Alvin's jaw and forced his head to snap to one side. The man's lip split and he launched a glob of red at Stoick's chest. The chief looked at it in disgust before rushing Alvin, attempting to slam the man down onto his back. Alvin slid onto his knees at the last second, slipping under Stoick's arms before Alvin spun away and managed to get around the larger man and stood back up to charge Val.

Hiccup squirmed, kicking and groping to get away, fear clenching him as he tried to escape Val's arms. Val turned to set him down behind her so she could defend them. As she dropped him to the ground, though, he bolted, taking off in the first direction his feet could kick him. She hardly had time to register what happened before Alvin sprinted past her to chase down her son. Her instincts burst into full gear and she pounded after the man, Stoick and Gobber on her heels.

Alvin, sensing the three behind him, didn't even try to grab Hiccup. He swung a fist the first chance he got. His attack barely struck, just nicking Hiccup enough in the back to send the fragile boy sprawling forward, face colliding with the ground, not having the chance to catch himself. As Alvin was about to finish the job, Hoark and Phlegma charged him from the other direction, colliding with him stomach and knocking him back, pinning him to the ground. He flailed about in the dirt, screaming curses and crying out. Spitelout came up a moment later with rope and between him, Stoick, Phlegma, and Hoark, they got the madman tied down easily. Alvin sat on the ground, huffing and bleeding at the lip.

Val had gone straight to Hiccup. She pulled her boy up and examined him. A small scratch on his chin and his forehead had a bruise. She stroked it tenderly, feeling herself wrench.

"Alvin... we were not friends, but I didn't not expect this treachery from you. I banish you from Berk. Do not ever show your face here on my island again. Ever," Stoick snapped, eyes burning down on the man.

Spiteout and Gobber forced Alvin to his feet and began to lead him towards the docks.

"This isn't over, Stoick. I'll be back. You'll regret this day. You've made a grave mistake," Alvin fired into the air before he was dragged too far to be heard.

Stoick ignored him and settled down by Val. His face was creased with worry and he seemed to regret having yelled at Hiccup earlier. He looked at Val, who frowned softly before turning back to Hiccup.

The boy stirred, eyes fluttering open.

"Mom? Dad? Why does my head hurt? What happened?" the boy moaned.

Val choked a sob, just glad to know that he didn't remember what had just happened. Stoick pulled her and Hiccup close, apologizing over and over. Hiccup remained squished between the two, unsure what exactly was going on and wishing his head would stop pounding. He glanced between the two and heard his father promise them he would not let any harm come to him or his mother. Hiccup cocked his head, thinking this a sudden and strange promise.

Too bad the next dragon fight would claim the life of his mother. She died a warrior. And Hiccup couldn't remember much of his life with her. But Stoick's resolve, despite this, never faded. He would protect Hiccup.

Especially from Alvin.

\* \* \*

><p>Mrrr? Sorry if it was written rather crummy compared to normal. Like I said... Was just braindead for a while. I also wrote a lot of this with only one contact in... so I may have missed some stupid typos, haha.</p>

Hope everyone enjoyed the Heather episode! I did, and Tumblr has been so much fun ^^

Uhm... Hope the next update will be a bit quicker. If not, I hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving (unless you live outside the US... in which just have a wonderful couple weeks)!

Please review (though not flames, but constructive criticism is allowed).

Love,

Deyoxis

## 11. The Enemies

So not as many reviews as normal, but an influx of new followers! That makes me feel special all the same (:

I finally finished jotting out everything I want to happen for the rest of the story. I'm planning on nineteen to twenty chapters total, so we've got eight or nine more chapters to go after this one! Hope you all enjoy them!

And, while I was writing this chapter... Fanfiction logged me out for some reason. So... three fourths of Alvin's section in this chapter vanished because I hadn't saved it yet. THANKS, FANFICTION -\_- So I apologize because when I went back to re-write it, I just didn't put as much thought into it as the first time around x3

\*\*Snake Screamer:\*\* Really? Interesting. I will probably not be playing that familial relationship in this story, but that's cool to know!

\*\*Thanks to my other reviewers: KaliAnn, Endermoon, Egyptprncssxoxo, storygirl199210, Kyuubi's Death, Pewter Griffon, and JJ! Also to the people that have just faved/followed this story! You are all awesome!\*\*

Lastly, three things before I get onto this chapter.

One. Obviously, the most recent episode introduced Spitelout's character a lot and he's nothing like how I portrayed him. That's okay. To be honest, I feel like where I'm separating from the show is before the Heather episodes. I could incorporate Heather if I wanted, but I feel like I would have needed to mention her earlier for her to come in smoothly. So, consider this my version of the Heather episodes... without Heather or the fight being over the Book of Dragons xD I actually originally thought about how Alvin might just want the book but, lets face it, it's not as interesting if he's just chasing down a book. So, therefore, my version of the characters will not be influenced by many of the newer episodes (unless I feel it could be important to my story).

Two. This chapter isn't the most exciting one. So it's a bit shorter than my last two because I don't want to drag you guys through a chapter that is mostly informational and explanatory. I apologize in advance, but it's one of those chapters I need to do even though it's not my favorite. But I suggest still reading carefully, as I feel like it ties up some loose ends. After this one, the story will speed back up again as the second battle approaches! I'm super pumped for those chapters, they'll be awesome!

Three. One more OC. Honestly, he's going to sound important from this chapter... but he won't be in the long run... He'll turn into, like, Savage and Guts, where he's important for a certain part but not much else x3

#### \*\*Chapter Eleven: The Enemies\*\*

Hiccup scanned the contents of the letter again. It was a letter addressed to Alvin, the handwriting sloppy and barely legible, but still clear to understand. It spoke about how she, Hella, could arrive within a week. However, the letter had been written a week ago. Meaning that she had reached Outcast Island today. The thought made Hiccup tense. Help for the enemy had arrived. He wanted to crumple the paper in his hands up until it was nothing more than a ball of parchment, rough and jagged. He contained himself, though, and handed it over to Astrid, who looked over it with wide, blue eyes.

The letter went on to talk about how she would be arriving with a good number of men, over two hundred. Men she had gathered from another island. The people were known as the Folk i Isen. Hiccup knew only small tidbits about them. They were not a tribe that Berk often dealt with and, based on the way his father spat the words out, he believed it was not a tribe Berk wanted to deal with. He stood there, watching his father seethe, breath escaping in sharp hisses between clenched teeth. The Hooligan chief clenched his fists, leaned back in his chair, then got antsy and leaned back forward, waiting for all the teens to read the paper before he begun his explanation.

Fishlegs, to spare them some time, read it out loud for Tuffnut,

Ruffnut, and Snotlout. The three knew how to read, but they were slower at it. It would be even harder for them to make out the poorly scratched words. Completely confused, the three exchanged glances before Snotlout, Fang resting on his shoulder, voiced the question that was on each of their minds, "What does this mean?"

Toothless, who was standing off to the side, snorted and wiggled impatiently, as if he, too, was eager to hear what Stoick had to say. The Night Fury jogged around in a quick circle before curling up, knowing better than to light the floor of the house on fire to settle into. That's what the slab upstairs in Hiccup's room was for.

Stoick, content to know the teens were all on the same page now, nodded his head and stood, coming around the table to face them all. He was grim, his mouth drawn into a hard line and his green eyes seeming to darken. He leaned back against the table, crossing his arms after a quick stroke of his thick, curly beard. He nodded his head once more, stating, "It seems there is to be a whole new fight ahead of us. Hella was a girl that I grew up with. She was banished by my father when she murdered a child and her own father."

"Murdered a child?" Astrid exclaimed, her voice edged as she repeated the words. "And her own father?"

"She claimed her father was abusive so he needed to be killed. She used the child as bait to lure him into a home about to be destroyed by a Zippleback. I saw it happen, I was the one who told my father about it."

"Was her father even abusive?" Fishlegs asked.

Stoick's gaze glanced at his feet. "Only Spite knew her well enough. According to him, the man was cruel. However, even he couldn't stand up for Hella when she killed the child, too. He had been trying to hold out and hope that she would eventually seek his help."

Hiccup winced at the mentioning of his uncle and he avoided looking at Snotlout. Hiccup nodded, unable to truly wrap his head around this. How could someone be so messed up? Then again, Alvin was pretty messed up himself. How, though? Hiccup stumbled forward as the thought crossed his mind. He needed to ask his dad about the mistake... What had Alvin been talking about?

"Yes, Hiccup, what is it?" Stoick asked when his son approached him a couple steps.

"Why was Alvin talking about fixing your mistake?"

Hiccup rarely saw his father at a loss for words. But the man pushed away from the table, mouth hanging open. He trailed away from them all, heavy footsteps echoing dully across the room. Toothless picked his head up, sensing the sudden change in atmosphere from just curiosity and anger to tense and uncertain. The dragon chattered, urging Stoick to continue. He then looked at Hiccup with his wide eyes, elongated scales twitching as he cocked his head, checking over his human.

Hiccup winced, looking down at his leg, though the bandages were

hidden under his pants. He pulled his head back up and gave Toothless a gentle smile, "I'm fine, bud."

"The mistake, according to Alvin, was that I didn't kill you when you were young."

Stoick's sudden statement caught everyone off guard. The words, even more, seemed to penetrate the very souls of the teens standing there as if it was a dark secret they weren't meant to hear. Hiccup seemed to have paled a couple shades and he teetered, but Astrid wrapped an arm around him to keep him up. He could hardly feel her warm embrace as a strange numbness clung to his body out of confusion. Kill him? Was his father supposed to kill him?

Stoick had glanced back to see how his son was reacting and saw the state of shock on his boy's face. He quickly realized he had more yet to explain and strode back over, shaking his head. "No, no, no, I'm sorry. Let me explain. You see, when we were young, Alvin was a small boy himself. Not quite as small as you, but plenty small. Anyways, the others and I used to give him such a hard time. I once even told him that... That when I was chief no one as puny as him would exist in the tribe."

"Why would you say something so dumb?" Tuffnut chuckled, but was elbowed in the stomach by his sister. Bruises not fully healed yet, he didn't just double over, but he fell onto his butt. "Ow! I'm hurt! I'm very much hurt!"

Ruffnut rolled her eyes and shushed him.

Stoick thanked the girl with a twitching smile before getting back to what he was saying. "I was young, brash, and too bold for my own good. However, I guess Alvin never forgot I said it and took it quite seriously. When you were five, you tried to help fight the dragons—"

"Big surprise there," Snotlout snorted. "Let me guess, it ended terribly?"

Stoick could only nod.

"Big surprise there," Astrid teased.

Hiccup, feeling offended, turned on his girlfriend, "Hey!"

"That's beside the point right now," Stoick interrupted before Hiccup could whip out a sarcastic comment. "Anyways, it gave Alvin the perfect chance to point fingers. He attacked me and then went after you to try and murder you himself. That was why he was banished."

"I feel like I should remember this critical point in my life where I was nearly killed," Hiccup mused.

"Alvin managed to knock you pretty hard. You didn't remember any of it when you came to. It's how you got the scar on your chin, though."

Hiccup gingerly reached up and rubbed his pointer finger across the raised skin of the tiny scar on his chin. Half the time he forgot it was there, it was barely noticeable. It was there, though, and now he

knew why. It was a proclamation of the time he almost died just as him living and breathing was a proclamation to Alvin as to why he was outcasted. No wonder the man hated him so much. He hated Stoick for banishing him, but he hated Hiccup for, well, existing. Hiccup sighed, supposing he would have to start getting used to the idea of having people want him dead if he was going to be a chief one day.

"So, what about the Folk i Isen? What do they have to do with all of this?" Fishlegs asked, getting everyone back on track as to what was really important.

Stoick came back from across the room and resettled himself by leaning against the table. By this point in time, Hiccup's left leg felt on fire from standing so much. He lifted Astrid's arm up, as she was still holding him, gave her a reassuring smile and then wandered to the steps and sat down upon one, feeling the release of stress on his leg as soon as his weight was redirected to his rear.

"The Folk i Isen are a tribe that live to the East of the Shivering Shores. So they're a fair distance away from Berk. They're one of the tribes that show up to the meetings between the nearby chiefs. They're also one of the islands still struggling to grow used to dragons. In fact, they probably still hunt them every now and then for the sport. You see, I will be honest here, Berk and the other tribes liked to compete on which island could have the most Nightmare heads. Berk was always in first and the Folk i Isen were always second. Well, that irked them a great deal. But if that wasn't enough, I didn't aid them during a starving period after a bigger freeze than normal hit their island one time," Stoick explained, gruff voice growing confident now that he was speaking on more... political terms.

"Why not?" Astrid inquired.

"It was the day after a raid so we had all ready lost a fair amount of food from the night before. I explained this to their leader, Frosne Hjerte, but he refused to believe I couldn't spare his people some food. So, well, he grew bitter towards me and, by chain of events, his whole tribe slowly came to hate Berk."

Hiccup asked for the letter back and Fishlegs waddled over, providing him the parchment. Hiccup pressed it flat on his lap, reading over it again. Puzzled, he looked at his father and asked, "Hella says she's bringing the warriors of the Folk i Isen to Outcast Island. How could she have gained their trust?"

"She must have survived all these years. After she was banished, we never heard of or about her again. Once she heard we and the Folk i Isen were enemies, she must have gone there to fight for their trust. They had a common enemy and that's all people need sometimes to join sides."

"Is that why they're friends with Alvin, too?" Tuffnut asked from the floor, where he had resigned to sitting instead of bothering to stand back up. "Because they're all jerks?"

"Right idea, Tuffnut," Astrid praised.

Stoick chuckled lightly, adding, "Alvin, Hella, and the Folk i Isen

all share the common enemy of the Isle of Berk."

"Those jerks!" Tuffnut spat.

Snotlout stepped forward suddenly, a grin on his face, "If we always beat them in killing dragons then we can definitely beat them all now! Especially since we are now friends with the dragons."

Fishlegs nodded hopefully, seeing where Snotlout was going.

Stoick shrugged. "The Folk i Isen are cold nutured. They can be brutal, but they're not tactful. So we'll see. I must be off to the Great Hall. I am meeting with Gobber, Hoark, Phlegma, and Blisteria to discuss battle tactics."

"Battle tactics?" Hiccup asked, about to push himself back to his feet, hands at the ready to push his body into a standing position.

Nodding, the chief stared over with a hard gaze, admitting, "If Hella is bringing the Folk i Isen, then we can not sit around and wait for them to come and attack us. We are going to strike them first."

"Awesome!" Ruffnut grinned, but was pulled backwards when Tuffnut snatched her hand and yanked it in an attempt to pull himself up. He ended up just sending her sprawling on the ground beside him. He burst into a fit of laughter, grinning and admitting, "Pretty sick!"

"You kids will be staying here," Stoick pointed.

Toothless growled, having enough of a grasp on what was being talked about to know that if the kids were ordered to stay, that meant he would have to, as well. Even if he could fly on his own, there would be no way he would be leaving Hiccup. He went where Hiccup went, but he wanted Hiccup to be able to go to battle so they could fight side-by-side. His warning didn't phase Stoick, who was used to him now. Fang, however, was a new dragon.

The little beast hopped off of Snotlout's shoulder and lumbered over to Stoick, letting out an assortment of clicking noises. It stopped at the base of Stoick's feet, sitting and then turning his gaze upward with narrowed eyes, slits that stared Stoick down. The chief blinked, unsure what to make of the stare down he was getting from the tiny dragon. When he looked back up, he saw all pairs of eyes on him as Toothless, Hiccup, Astrid, Fishlegs, Tuffnut, Ruffnut, and Snotlout looked at him with rather disapproving grins.

"Dad... You know you need us," Hiccup finally reported, pushing himself to his feet at that moment.

Astrid nodded, swiping her bangs from her eyes, "Remember how good the twins and I did on the docks? Imagine if you had all five of our dragons working together, concentrated on the enemy and not just protecting people that were fine anyways. We've all recovered from our earlier injuries. We're up for this!"

Stoick hated understanding the sense in Astrid's words. The attack they were planning wasn't to happen for another week. If well rested,

Hiccup's wrist would be able to come out of the cast (it had only been a sprain) and he would be able to use his leg well enough to work Toothless' tail. Astrid's bruise was nothing but a shade darker on her face, but even that would vanish entirely soon. Ruffnut's cheek was just a scar slashed across her face, not bothering her. Fishlegs was completely fine, though Tuffnut and Snotlout were the worse. Tuffnut's body refused to heal, the bruises still dark on his body, but he hadn't been sitting down and relaxing like he needed to be. Same with Snotlout, whose head was still mending.

"Fine," Stoick groaned, but raised a finger. "Under some conditions!"

The teens nodded obediently. They were glad to be going, but it was war, not a game. They tried to take it seriously, though the spark of excitement in Tuffnut and Ruffnut's eyes was difficult to miss. None of them aside from Hiccup and Snotlout had gotten the full taste of war in the last battle, so they had yet to understand the full horrors of battling while watching comrades fall and the pain of losing someone close to you.

"Tuffnut, Snotlout, and Hiccup, you three are not to leave bed except to use the bathroom and stretching. You need to heal properly and your bodies can't do that with you all walking around and about. Ruffnut, Astrid, and Fishlegs can help you guys with anything you need," Stoick started, then heard low whines from Toothless and Fang. "Toothless and Fang can help, too. The other condition is I want you to be properly equipped. Armor and weapons. Maybe some protection even for your dragons. Gobber's been working on some designs that might suit them all well so visit him to try it all on. Got that?"

"Yes, sir!" they all chimed in unison.

\* \* \*

><p>"Frosne!" Alvin greeted, marching across the sand to shake hands with the leader of the Folk i Isen. He reached out, grasping the man's firm grip and moving his hand up and down, shaking his head with a nodding smile. "Good to have you come to my island."<p>

"Alvin," Frosne acknowledged. "Good to see you, I suppose."

Alvin winced. The man before him was meaty and strong looking. He didn't have quite the look of power that Alvin had, but something about him held an air of respect and authority. It frustrated Alvin because he was the one in charge, not this man. Frosne was a very pale man, dirt smeared across his face to give him a bit of a darker look. He wore several heavy layers of clothing, probably because their island was frigid at this time of year just as it was every other time. His eyes were wide and an exceedingly bright shade of blue, a shade that seemed to shine with a devilish glint. His hair was slicked back into a thick ponytail, but his beard was merely stubble, as he was obviously normally clean shaven to reveal the pointed chin and high cheekbones of his angular face. His smile was as appealing as a piece of crap.

"You will be fond of seeing me once I am the ruler of Berk and our two islands aid each other in complete conquest," Alvin

cackled.

Frosne didn't appear pleased. "I care nothing for control, Alvin. Simply revenge and revenge only. Once Berk is yours, I expect you to simply leave us in peace and aid us when we're in trouble as payment for our current help."

Alvin sneered, not finding the man pleasant at all. He looked over at Hella. He motioned with his head towards Frosne and snarled, "Where'd you dig up this guy?"

"The Folk i Isen took me in after I explained to them I was also an enemy of Berk. I worked pretty hard to earn their trust and convince them that working alongside you would be worth it. Try not to blow it," the woman deadpanned.

Alvin blinked with a hidden frustration and forced himself to glance back at the four of his men left. They were exchanging glances, seeming unsure what to do. Alvin motioned for them to come forward and waved a hand out to the men that Frosne had brought. "Entertain the men of our guest while we speak in private," he ordered.

As the men trekked across the sand to meet up with the men on the boats, Alvin motioned for Hella and Frosne to follow him to the meeting chambers. He inquired as to why Frosne hated Berk so, but barely paid any mind to the man's explanation. Alvin could care less for another island's squander with Berk. He was doing this for his own revenge. For himself. For power. At this soothing thought, Alvin smiled a fake smile, one that slid across his face like honey. He glanced back over his shoulder to nod at Frosne, giving the man an appearance that he was listening to the tail of the Folk i Isen's desperate starvation after the biggest freeze their island had ever seen. When they climbed up into the meeting chamber, however, Alvin was ready to get down to business.

Frosne stated that he didn't want control, but Alvin would not feel eased of suspicions of treachery until an agreement was made. He started towards the door that led to the outside ledge, intent on closing it to escape prying ears if someone took a dragon to the ledge... Although only the injured Nightmare and the pitiful Nadder were left aside from Blood Cry.

As Alvin was about to shut the door, he saw the flash of crimson scales sailing towards the door. The Thunderdrum perched on the ledge, letting out a roar of greeting before yanking his head to tell Alvin to come look. The Outcast leader strode out onto the overhanging, coming alongside Blood Cry. He smirked, crackling with laughter when he noticed the beasts that Blood Cry wanted him to see.

"Well done, my power ally. You did well," Alvin praised the dragon, receiving a wide, fanged smile in response.

Heading back into the chamber, Blood Cry followed him in and shut the door with his tail. As the two neared, Alvin grew great feelings of pleasure in his stomach when he noticed a glimmer of haunted fear in Frosne's eyes. The man was certainly not quite used to dragons, yet. This pleased Alvin tremendously.

"So, the terms?" Alvin asked into the air.

Frosne, hiding his earlier fear, quickly piped up, declaring, "I will capture Stoick and kill him."

"What makes you so special as to earn the honor of killing Stoick?" Alvin questioned, dark eyes narrowing.

Frosne smiled, "Stoick is the reason I'm here. Let me be the one to plunge the sword through his heart. You can give me the signal, whenever you want me to do it. After you have Berk, my men and I will return to our island and expect nothing from you except aid when we are suffering."

Alvin mulled this idea over. He was not fond of the idea that he could not be the one to draw Stoick's blood, but he would have to move past it. At least he could decide when. So long as he could splatter the boy's blood, Stoick's was one honor he was willing to sacrifice. His gaze transferred to Hella.

"I want to return to Berk with you when this is done. I expect a high position, though," the woman replied coolly, her hazel eyes glinting.

"Done and done. So long as you all answer to me throughout the duration of this upcoming battle," Alvin announced.

Hella and Frosne exchanged an uneasy glance, Hella raising an eyebrow. She turned back to him and pointed out, "You rushed blindly into your last battle and look where it got you. I will follow you into this battle if and only if you take my plan into consideration. It beats mindless slaughter."

Alvin thought back to the beasts that Blood Cry had shown him. He turned and looked at his dragon, a smirk playing across his features. He then spun back to face his esteemed guests and chuckled. "I have an addition to your plan, actually. Have you ever heard of a dragon known as Scauldron?"

\* \* \*

><p>Mrrr... Told you it was a bit boring. And definitely shorter. But Fanfiction logging out on me doesn't help x3 But that's all right, the next chapters will pick back up (:<p>

Not expecting too many reviews about the chapter since it was dull but I would love your thoughts on the Folk i Isen twist, Frosne (I promise he won't be very important except for, maybe, like, one more chapter? He'll be around, but not doing much ^^;), what you think might happen, or what you think of the story as a whole so far!  
8D

Love,

Deyoxis

## 12. The First Scream

Since that last chapter was just so dull, I'm making it up to you all, my loyal readers, BY UPDATING AGAIN! 8D

Whoo~

\*\*But a huge thanks to the readers who did review: KaliAnn, Pewter Griffon, Egyptprncssxoxo, and Foxlight of Windclan! Hearts to you four... AND COOKIES! (:\*\*

So, anyways, now that we got through that necessary, yet dull chapter... on to the buildup of the second battle! The reason I was able to get this chapter out a bit quicker is because it's another shorter chapter. After this one (and maybe chapter thirteen... the outline isn't very long but the actual chapter may end up being), though, my chapters are going to go back to the length of chapters nine and ten. Maybe longer because I cover A LOT starting with chapter fourteen. If I feel the need, I may break a couple of those chapters up x3

By the way, I realized that I messed up Barf and Belch's heads up in a past chapter... I said that Barf was Ruffnut's head and Belch's was Tuffnut's. That's not correct, I don't know right from left, apparently xD I will have to fix that when I get around to remembering it. But just know that I'm correcting myself, so Barf is Tuffnut's, Belch is Ruffnut's, haha.

#### \*\*Chapter Twelve: The First Scream\*\*

Hiccup was in his house with Toothless, strapping on the improved saddle and the armor. There wasn't much added since Hiccup and Gobber didn't want Toothless to be weighed down, but they tried to help cover the weakest points of the Night Fury's body. Currently, Hiccup was yanking on the saddle strap, trying to tighten it so that was secure. No chances. If the saddle fell off during the fight, Hiccup knew he might not have the time to fix it and that would be leaving both himself and Toothless vulnerable... him more so. Attached to the strap that wrapped around Toothless' belly was a chest plate made of a smooth, thin sheet of sturdy metal that had been made with the help of a Nadder's heated fire. It covered Toothless' sensitive stomach and part of his chest so that arrows or anything fired at him from below would be blocked. Hiccup had the metal burnt and even used some ink to do his best in turning the metal the same pitch black color as Toothless' body, to help him blend in a bit better and avoid it shining in the sunlight.

Satisfied the saddle was in place, Hiccup turned and picked up the nose piece that would guard Toothless' face. He held it in his palms, gauging the lightness of it in his hands. Even though his father had confined him to the bed that week, Gobber had swung by and he and Hiccup had poured over ideas for the dragons' armor while Astrid helpfully fetched them any materials or supplies. After all, Gobber would be the one making them, but he needed the expertise of someone who knew dragons. One of Hiccup's biggest points in the discussions had been that the metal used needed to be sturdy, but weightless enough not to throw off the dragons' flying abilities. The face covering for Toothless came down to the point of his nose, rounded up over his eyes so the he could see, then made a base up along his elongated scales, wrapping around the largest two in order to keep it firmly attached. Hiccup carefully pulled it on, then pressed it down into position while Toothless remained still, allowing the foreign object to be placed.

Once it was settled, Hiccup ran a hand along it, finding it strange to stroke a cold substance of inky black instead of the warm scales of his best friend. He pursed his lips, then put his hands under Toothless' chin and pulled his friend's great head up, peering into the large, green eyes. "Is it comfortable?"

Toothless snorted, showing that it wasn't too bad. It wasn't meant to be comfortable, unfortunately, it was meant for protection. Hiccup scratched the dragon under the chin lovingly, earning a playful growl in response that seemed to say to stop messing around. So Hiccup stopped and withdrew his hands, nodding, and narrowing his eyes seriously. He turned and went over to get his own outfit addition.

To ensure he would remain in the saddle, Hiccup had gotten the riding vest back out. He hadn't been using it much as of late because he hadn't been doing anything so reckless that he had needed it. He pulled it off a hook. It had been equipped with the same thin metal that Toothless had, attached to the front and back to give him a sort of sandwiched look between metal plates. On them, he had drawn images of Toothless, feeling that his dragon was a well-suited symbol for him. He pulled the vest on, tightening the straps on the sides and then picked up his Viking helmet as well as the weapon he had chosen, his dagger. After setting the helmet on his head, he threw his arms out to the side and struck a pose. "Ta da!"

Toothless rolled his eyes and shook his head, wandering forward and sniffing the metal. After a moment, the Night Fury pulled away and sat up, gaze peering down at his own armor where he realized the similarities. Finally, he shrugged, content to go with it and went back down on all fours, expecting they would be heading off any moment. The dragon was shivering with anticipation, muscles rippling under his scales and tensing, tail lashing about behind him. He nearly sent the cauldron spinning, but realized the mess his motions could cause and forced himself to still.

Hiccup chuckled, then led the way from the house, hopping down the steps to the pathway, breathing in the crisp scent of morning. The dew was practically frozen in the chill that laced across the land. The horizon was a pale line of pink as the sun grew closer to dawning. The rest of the sky was still a vision of night, the last of the stars twinkling with their shimmering light. A gentle wind blew across the land, announcing a calm day, though clouds were slinking nearby, speaking of overcast but hopefully not rain. Down below him, the center of the village had mingling people who were not involved with the army and children who waved goodbye sleepily to the parent that was leaving. Elderly, even Mildew, were murmuring prayers of safety to Odin, Goths drawing in the dirt with a deep sense of concentration. Hiccup peered through the crowd and noticed Snotlout and his mother exciting their house, Fang gripping Snotlout's shoulder with an intensity that revealed he would not be moving.

Hiccup was about to head in the direction of his cousin and aunt, but noticed another form heading up the path towards him. He felt Toothless bump him lightly from behind, but ignored his dragon for a moment. Toothless made a soft grunt, but then noticed who Hiccup was watching and ceased to even bother trying to get the boy's attention.

Astrid was treading up the path, her golden hair gleaming in the glowing light. Her eyes were wide and soft as she approached, a gentle, curving smile on her features, but one more of worry than of pleasure. Her outfit had not been altered much, as her spiked skirt and shoulder pads all ready gave her more protection than Hiccup. Her shirt had an extra layer of padding beneath it, not metal however, as that would hinder her ability to maneuver well. She and the others were trusted with no metal armor because of the obvious fact they all had fighting skills.

"Hiccup," she greeted as she approached, voice laced with worry. "Are you sure you're up for this?"

Hiccup flashed his best cocky grin, though deep inside he could feel his insides twisting and turning and knotting in a million different ways. "Yeah, I've got this. With Toothless and you fighting beside me, that battle will be over before you know it."

"Hiccup, I can't help but worry. Alvin wants to murder you. He wants you dead. It's something he's been after since you were five," she started.

Hiccup cut her off, sarcastically throwing out, "Okay, Astrid, I think we all get the point that Alvin wants me dead..."

"But I don't want you dead. You nearly gave me a heart attack last time when... When you were out for two days. I thought we were done with that after the battle with the Red Death. You were so white, I thought we had been too late and the wound had bled too much. I can't bear the idea of seeing you like that again."

Hiccup was touched. Ever since last Snoggletog, Astrid had been like a flower opening up. Unlike a real flower, though, she wasn't doing it in one joyful burst. It seemed each time she was adding a little more, an extra smile, a sweet sentence, a kiss if she really felt it. They were rare and beautiful moments but they were Hiccup's favorite moments. Although this one seemed to have found a way to make his heart wrench as he calmly responded, "It won't be like that this time, Astrid. I'll be fine and we'll win this thing. You'll see. And when it's over maybe we could have a picnic together, just you and me."

Toothless whined teasingly, pretending to be pitiful over the idea of being left out. He had grown used to the fact that, every now and then, if Hiccup did want to be alone with just another person, it was either Gobber or Astrid. Though Gobber had been trying more and more to push Hiccup to hang out with others. Toothless loved spending time with his boy, but he had been growing better about giving him space, too, something Stoick had never noticed. Hiccup's father was constantly worried that Hiccup was still too reclusive.

Hiccup cast him a joking glare and the Night Fury just made his strange laughing noise back, shaking his shoulders and grinning a big, toothless grin.

"I'd like that," Astrid finally admitted.

Hiccup was on the offensive that time. Instead of Astrid snatching his shirt and pulling him into the kiss, Hiccup stepped forward into it before she had time to do it herself. She was caught so off guard

by his initiative that, for a moment, he feared he had poorly timed it. The moment passed when she pressed back into the kiss and he felt his heart melt like snow in the sun.

"Are you guys ready- Sorry!" Fishlegs began to say, but then burst into a fit of apologies when he neared and recognized what was going on. He clapped his hands over his eyes and turned around like it would change the fact he had seen them.

Pulling away, Hiccup and Astrid laughed. It wasn't that big of a deal that they had been seen, but it was always entertaining when it was Fishlegs. The boy always had a big reaction for them.

\* \* \*

><p>"Man, we are so in trouble," Tuffnut moaned, looking down at Barf's head, which lay groaning before him. "Our dragon's dead!"</p>

"No he's not," Ruffnut rolled her eyes. "We've all ready done that joke. He's just sick again. Like with that stupid flower."

"But there's no flowers around here, so it can't be making him sick."

"Then maybe that's not what's making him sick," Ruffnut pointed out, bending down and lifting Belch's head. She scratched her dragon softly, wondering why he wasn't doing anything but lying there. It frustrated her. Stoick wouldn't let them go into battle without Barfbelch. They couldn't just sit around at home, however. But it also worried her that the Zippelback was ill. Could they really just leave him to go to a battle they might not make it out of?

The sound of footsteps alerted her that someone was coming up behind them. Tossing her head about, braids flinging around, she noticed Snotlout approaching. She gently set Belch's head back down and stood up beside her brother to greet their friend. The stockier boy paused when he noticed the state that Barfbelch was in behind them and he cocked his head, seeming confused before it finally hit him and his mouth formed an "o" shape in horrid realization.

Tuffnut sighed, "I guess we're going to have to sneak onto a ship."

"But what about your dragon?" Snotlout asked, then winced as Fang jumped off, finally removing his claws from digging into his shoulder.

The little Terror trotted over to Barfbelch and nudged Barf's head. The Zippelback's mouth sparked and Fang jumped away, deciding it might be safer to converse with the other head. Tapping Belch, Fang purred softly, waiting for a response. Belch lifted his head, grunting slurred growls that released a small leak of green gas. Fang stepped back to avoid getting a waterfall poured on him. Responding with his own chirps and clicks, he started back towards Snotlout. The boy's eyes lit up, however, revealing that he - yes, Snotlout - had come up with an idea. Ruffnut and Tuffnut instinctively took steps back out of an unconscious fear of what the genius conclusion Snotlout had could be.

"Fang, I have a very important job for you," Snotlout cried, bending over and putting his hands on his knees as he looked at the Terror with a grin. Fang glanced back up at him, seemingly unimpressed by the notion. "You can stay here and keep an eye on Barf and Belch!"

Ruffnut and Tuffnut blinked in surprise, certainly having not been expecting a... good idea from Snotlout. After exchanging a hard glare with her twin, Ruffnut stepped forward, grinning, "Yeah, Fang, there is no one we'd rather trust to keep him happy and safe but you!"

"Yeah, uh... what she said!" Tuffnut agreed.

Fang was displeased with the idea, clucking wildly in protest. Snotlout shook his head and fell to his knees, pleading with the small dragon to do this task. "C'mon, Fang! I can't keep track of you while we're battling and if anything were to happen to you—" he broke off.

Fang winced. The little dragon was still as sensitive about the death of his previous owner as his current owner was. He watched Snotlout's face fall as the boy recalled his father. Snotlout instantly tried to bring it back to a determined look, refusing to look weak. Fang glanced over at Ruffnut and Tuffnut, who were staring at their shoes like they had suddenly become fascinating. It was bad when even Tuffnut grasped the situation that well. So Fang gave a resigned sigh, knowing Snotlout, Tuffnut, and Ruffnut would discover what he had been trying to tell them later. He could feel the irritation practically radiating off of Barf and Belch. The dragon was not pleased that they were going to be left behind.

When Snotlout saw Fang's agreement to the suggestion, he managed to smile, slowly getting back to his feet. The raw fact that he had nearly talked about his father felt like a fresh blow to his head, but moved past it as best he could. After all, his head was finally feeling normal again, he didn't exactly want to experience the dull drumming of pain from it again. Or have Fishlegs help him get better. The boy was a mess.

Adjusting his helmet on his head, Snotlout fixed his shirt, which had been padded. His mother had come close to making him wear the strange metal plates that Hiccup wore, but Snotlout had no desire to enter the battle in any other way but the Viking way. He'd take a bludgeon, equip himself with a shield, and give those metal plates to Hookfang but nothing more.

"So, are you guys really going to sneak onto a ship?" he pried

Ruffnut grinned, feeling the sense of adventure crawling through her skin as she nodded. She looked over at her brother, who broke into his flashy smile, eyes narrowing with delight at the thought of doing something they shouldn't. Stoick would probably have their hides should they survive, but that was what made these things all the more exciting. Nothing like a good spine-tingling thrill to make life all the more awesome. When they looked back forward, Snotlout was shrugging, seeming content with the answer as he started walking in the direction of the meeting spot where the dragon riders would be meeting. He raised a hand to wave to them as he went off, informing

them that he would let Hiccup know.

As he disappeared around a corner, Ruffnut turned to look at their dragon and the little Terror that sat in front. Belch's head was still raised and Barf slowly lifted his. They two heads blinked with a sadness in the depths of their eyes. Ruffnut actually felt her stomach clench and she hated it. She wandered forward, letting Belch rest his big head in her arms as she wrapped her hands around him.

"We'll be back soon. Just rest up. We've brought you plenty of fish and Fang can help you if you need anything else. Just get better, okay?" she soothed, hating this because it felt too much like when they had to leave him on Dragon Island after Mildew convinced the village that dragons were bad. It ripped her heart and that was one feeling she did not approve of.

She could hear Tuffnut speaking to Barf. When he was done, she released Belch and switched with him to give the other head a hug. Barf responded sullenly, seeming to want to tell them something, but not knowing Norse to tell it. It had never troubled Ruffnut before, but Hiccup, Astrid, and Fishlegs had always expressed discontent over not knowing what their dragons were trying to tell them all the time. Now, however, she understood what the three meant. She pulled away and gazed into Barf's yellow eyes like the answer would be there, but she found nothing but a vast, bright yellow.

"Lets go, Ruff," Tuffnut called to her.

Ruffnut nodded, turning and darting away. It didn't occur to her until they reached the docks that they had forgotten to add extra padding or plate metal. So they had no armor. And they would be with the ground force. She paused as Tuffnut scoped the ships, trying to seem casual about being down on the docks. People bustled around them, knocking into them every once and a while, sending them off balance until they grabbed one another for support. Ruffnut was getting irritated. She could barely make out the faces of the people, the docks being darker with the sun still having not risen and the light barely seeping into the area from over the large rocky landscape and the great sails of boats.

"There! We can hide among the weapon crates," Tuffnut pointed, whispering softly to her as he pulled her close.

Ruffnut grinned, nodding her head. That was actually a good idea because they had forgotten their weapons, too.

Why were they being allowed to go to war again?

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup, Toothless, Astrid, Stormfly, Fishlegs, and Meatlug came up from behind everyone to the ledge where the dragons would take off. Nadders, Nightmares, Gronckles, and Zippylebacks all mingled about everywhere, causing a cacophony of noise that mixed in with the shouts and orders and greetings of the Viking people that were scattered among them. Hiccup let Toothless take the lead to clear the path to get them to the front. He looked at the grim faces of his fellow villagers as he passed, feeling a small stab inside him that couldn't help thinking this was his fault.</p>

He knew it wasn't, his father had tried to press that upon him multiple times over the week. However, when part of the reason Alvin was outcasted involved him, he couldn't help but feel like some of the responsibility was hammering down onto him. Stoick had shaken his head at that idea and told Hiccup that it was all his fault, not Hiccup's. After all, Alvin wouldn't have turned out the way he had if Stoick and the others had just treated him a bit differently.

Stoick had laughed about that, as well, saying that even if Alvin had been a buff man, then it would still be hard to be nice to him because his personality lacked charm, sincerity, and generally anything nice. For a little guy, he sure had an attitude.

Reaching the front of the group, Toothless moved to stand next to Hookfang, who was waiting alone. Hoark, the Viking that would be helping to lead the dragon squadron of the army, was prepping the Nadder that he would ride, checking her armor plate for anything that might loosen it. Hookfang yanked his head up upon seeing the familiar faces, scanned them, but then realized that his rider was not among them. He moved to put his head back down and Hiccup found himself on the alert, wondering why Snotlout wasn't here, yet.

"Where's Snotlout?" Astrid questioned not a moment after, walking up beside Hiccup and crossing her arms. Her eyes were narrowed at Hookfang, like she expected the dragon to answer. The Nightmare merely flicked his tail, seemingly bored.

Hiccup turned to face her, shrugging his shoulders and sniffing lightly, "I don't know."

"Don't worry, your savior is right here, don't get your pants in a bundle."

Snotlout was striding up to them, chest puffed up as usual. It was a nice sight for once, and Hiccup had to smile at the boy's arrogance. He noticed Astrid was smiling lightly, too, just glad to see the Snotlout they all knew and somewhat loved.

"Our pants in a bundle?" Fishlegs questioned, looking up from where he had been stroking Meatlug, whispering soft words of comfort.

Snotlout glanced over at him like it was no big deal, waving his hand and declaring, "Whatever."

"Where were you? And where are the twins?" Astrid finally piped up, watching as Snotlout marched by them to get to Hookfang, who raised his head and accepted a pat on the nose.

"I went to go get them. However, Barfbelch is sick."

"Sick?" Hiccup asked, stepping forward and feeling concern bubble in his belly.

Snotlout nodded. "Fang's going to watch them."

Fishlegs came to stand beside Astrid and Hiccup, "Fang?"

"Yeah, Tuff and Ruff snuck onto one of our boats so that they could

join the fight."

Snotlout was treating it like no big deal. Hiccup couldn't believe this, his mouth falling slightly open. When he twisted his head to look at Fishlegs and Astrid, he could see his own expression mirrored in theirs. He turned back to his cousin, shaking his head, "And you just let them do this?"

"What, I'm not their... mom," Snotlout shrugged, turning and sliding onto Hookfang's neck.

The Nightmare raised it, letting out a bellow of approval, signaling that the dragons were ready to go. Hiccup, Astrid, and Fishlegs all bit their lips, but moved to their dragons, seating themselves in the saddles. Hiccup hooked himself in, tugging at the cord to make sure it was secure. He raised his face back up to the horizon, a wind picking up and blowing a cool breeze into their faces, tussling their hair. He glanced to his right where Snotlout was, fists curled around Hookfang's horns. To Hiccup's left, Astrid was shifting about in her saddle, then reaching down to make sure her axe was tied in tight to its "sheath" of sorts. To her left, Fishlegs had just placed his hammer in the attached bag and was resuming his loving patting of Meatlug, still whispering softly to her.

Hiccup chuckled lightly, facing back forward. His eyes dropped a little to peer upon Toothless' face. The Night Fury had his head craned around to look up at him, flashing a gum colored smile. Snorting and twitching his head eagerly, the dragon wiggled about beneath him, scratching the ground with his claws. Hiccup managed to smile, reaching forward and scratching the side of Toothless' neck encouragingly.

"Hope your courage rubs off on me, bud. Lets do this. Together."

Toothless let out a soft roar of agreement, then spread his wings out, nearly knocking Astrid and Snotlout off their dragons. They cried out angrily, but Toothless and Hiccup ignored them, Hiccup grinning and grabbing the handle of the saddle. His fists tightened as the sound of a horn burst into the air, meaning the ships were taking off. In one powerful downward stroke, Toothless was shooting upward and Hiccup felt the rush crash into him and gravity release. He pressed himself closer to the saddle, waiting for the cue to flick his foot and open the tail.

Once they were level, Hiccup released his tight hold, sitting up and glancing over his shoulder. Behind him, a swarm of fifty something dragons were climbing into the air behind him. He then shot his gaze downward, looking for the ships. Their rickety forms were fighting against the ocean, tossing about in the sloping waves as they slowly sailed out towards the bursting of the sun over the horizon. A flash of colors and a beam of gold, Hiccup nearly had to squint from being blinded. Toothless took another powerful beat of his wings before purring a gentle question.

"Yeah, bud, lets go."

Toothless was the first to dive down to the ships. About twenty hulking boats were sliding through the water, wakes bubbling behind them. Toothless came level with Stoick's ship on on side while

Stormfly banked down to the other side. Stoick and Gobber raised up ropes and each one tossed theirs out to Hiccup and Astrid. Hiccup just managed to grasp his, then bent over, handing it to Toothless, who gripped it in his two front paws. Once wound securely between his fingers, he sped up, Stormfly mimicking except she had to hold the rope with her back legs seeing as she lacked front ones. The two dragons kept a steady pace with each other, dragging the boat behind them at a faster pace than if they merely let the winds blow them. Hiccup glanced behind and saw the other boats and dragons were doing fine.

When he faced back forward, he unconsciously curled his fingers around the handle, biting his lip and knowing that beyond the horizon, though the sun was shining so brilliantly, a storm was brewing.

Beneath him, Toothless could sense his anxiety and moaned softly, trying to look back without careening into the ocean. Hiccup glanced into the soft, worried eyes of his best friend and sighed softly, wondering if anything could ever get past his intelligent Night Fury. He shook his head, offering a simple, "I'm nervous, bud. I'll be all right. It's just hard not to be after how the previous battle ended up."

At the thought of the ending of the last endeavor, his leg, his wrist, the wounds of his friends', the death of his uncle, Hiccup felt a draining, like his energy had pooled up inside of him and then was released as a spiraling waterfall into the sea. He groaned, tearing his thoughts away from the past and trying to refocus on the future. Outcast Island wasn't even in sight, yet.

Not much time later, though, the tip of the mountain came into view. Hiccup sat up and twisted in his seat to meet the gaze of his father. The man nodded, twining a finger through his curly beard. Hiccup ordered Toothless to drop back so the Night Fury slowed, Stormfly following suit. The two dragons ease back as the boat resumed its lurching pace. Toothless sailed over it, dropping the rope down to Gobber before darting out of the way to let Stormfly do the same.

"Hiccup," Stoick called up and Hiccup nodded to show he was listening. "The clouds have moved in."

Hiccup repeated his nod, but shot his eyes skyward for a second to see the overcast sky that was blanketing the world in a dim shine of grey. He looked back down to his father, awaiting the order he was sure to come.

"Get all the dragons to fly above the clouds and vanish. Maybe we'll have an advantage if we can get you guys in without being seen."

Toothless beat the wind and, with Hiccup controlling the tail, began to sail up into the sky. Hiccup raised and arm and pointed upward. The Vikings following raised their fists in acknowledgement. So Toothless rose up into the air and spun through the clouds. He leveled back out once he was above the cotton candy puffs and Hiccup waited as, one by one, the rest of the squad came up behind them.

Stormfly beat her wings to get up alongside them and Astrid called out, "When do you think we should go down?"

"I bet we'll hear something that might work as a good signal," Hiccup shrugged.

Astrid seemed irritated by the reply, but didn't respond. She turned her face back forward, eyes darkening. The air seemed to stiffen as everyone waited for the inevitable. For the battle to begin. For blood to shed and lives to be lost and, yet, a glimmer of hope radiated through them all. To be rid of Alvin forever, to be free of the threat of the outcasts and possibly even the Folk i Isen. It was a joyous thought. Could peace truly exist on Berk?

That was when they heard the first scream.

\* \* \*

><p>"I choose this one," Tuffnut decided, pulling out the double ended spear from the weapons box.</p>

Ruffnut glanced at the one in her own hand, puzzled. She was holding a double ended spear herself. They had just spent a good ten minutes bickering over it. Go figure there was another one in the pile that they could have easily solved their problems with. They jumped when Phlegma came marching over. The woman had discovered them the ten minutes ago.

"You won't be needing the spears, you're not leaving the boat," she ordered, jabbing a finger at the two.

Ruffnut rolled her eyes, shaking her head and shrugging, "Try and stop us!"

"Yeah... Or... wait, what is she trying to stop us from doing?" Tufnut drawled.

Ruffnut brought a hand to her face, rubbing her temples. Honestly, she knew she wasn't the smartest tool in the shed, but sometimes Tuffnut could sure make her seem a genius. Not that she didn't mind being the smart one, but sometimes it seriously sucked when your brother was dumber than... anything. Just as she was about to punch him, smack him, or just scold him, the boat vibrated, shaking wildly beneath their feet.

Tuffnut and Phlegma were knocked to the deck while Ruffnut stumbled to the side, leaning over the edge. That was when she saw the massive, dark form slink out beneath the boat. It caused the water to ripple and another shake. She heard one Viking ask what was happening, but found her throat was lodged, like something thick and gooey was stuck in it. She trembled, fingers white as they gripped the edge, watching the darkness swallowing the area around the boat.

That was when a great blast of water broke up from beneath the deck, splintering the boat in two. Shattered and useless, it caved in on itself as the mighty beast that caused the damage reared its head out of the water nearby.

Ruffnut just managed to scream into the air before the sinking half

of the boat she was on jerked and she was tossed into the frigid ocean.

\* \* \*

><p>A bit slow at the start, but hopefully exciting at the end  
;D<p>

Hope that makes up for the previous chapter. Maybe I should have combined them... Yeah, perhaps. Oh, well, too late now xD

Uhm...

Nice/encouraging/constructive reviews, please?  
^^;

Love,

Deyoxis

### 13. Perfectly Trapped

I... was just busy... Christmas coming up... lots of shopping. Got to come home so I hung out with all my friends that I haven't seen... Made cookies... Basically, sorry x3 The only free time I had was when I was relaxing because my lower back has been facing some serious pain recently. Unfortunately, when your back kills you like that, you can't really focus well enough to write a decent story D:

But I hope everyone here had a wonderful holiday no matter what you celebrate (:

\*\*But thank you, reviewers! KaliAnn, IndigoSkies-Wolf River, JJ, Amazing-Thalia-Grace, RJM, TooLazyToSignIn (lol, nice xD and, by the way, your review was so sweet! Thank you so much!) and all those guest/anon reviews! You all are the greatest (: I will finish this story, I promise! I will hopefully get back to my speedy updates soon enough when the holidays are completely done (including New Years...) x3\*\*

And to my reviewer who asked if Blood Cry broke the ship, nope x3 A blast of water broke the ship a part and you'll see what caused that in just a moment!

And one more thing... Remember, I'm acting like Thawfest hasn't happened. In this world, Thawfest doesn't exist, okay? There's a part with Snotlout here that, if Thawfest existed, it wouldn't make sense. I had all of this planned before I saw the episode.

\*\*Chapter Thirteen: Perfectly Trapped

><strong>

>Toothless cried out, Hiccup leaning forward and flicking the tail so they could dive down beneath the clouds to see what was happening. Astrid called out to him, but he had all ready plunged under the mass of clouds, his face sprayed with water droplets as they came down up over the ships. Hiccup's eyes widened as he pulled Toothless up to keep them from crashing into the ocean. The sea churned wildly as two hulking Cauldron moved about, blasting boiling water up through

fleet, taking down four in what seemed like only a moment. Hiccup sought out his father's ship, seeing it was fine.<p>

Thornado, who had been riding in the boat with Stoick, launched over the edge and vanished into the swirling waters after one of the Cauldron.

Hiccup and Toothless tossed their heads about, trying to seek out of the other monster lurking under the waves. Toothless let out a furious growl when his gaze caught the creature and he beat his wings to go after it. Hiccup flinched, unsure what they could do to the dragon that moved through the water. It would probably have the upper hand out here in the middle of the vast expanse of ocean. It didn't slow Toothless, though, and the Night Fury came gliding up above the form that rippled beneath them as a dark, shadowy blob.

"Think you can get its attention?" Hiccup inquired.

Toothless wasted no time drawing in a breath, gathering his plasma fire, before launching it straight below them onto the pinpoint of where the Cauldron's back appeared to be. The sea surged down from the blast, then came exploding back up as the shockwave of purple flung itself away in a giant circle. A great wave protruded from where the shot happened, stopping the creature that the fire had been aimed at. Toothless hovered, vast wings pounding to stay aloft.

Hiccup felt a rage in his stomach. It was of both fear and confidence as he peered over to see what the Cauldron would do now. The beast was growing bigger and, soon, a balloon head was lifting out of the water, swelling as it got ready to shoot its fiery liquid.

Hiccup threw his body to the right, adjusting Toothless' tail so that they barreled just out of the way. Hiccup could feel the heat of the water brush his skin as it shot past and he heard a yelp of surprise and pain from Toothless as it caught the tip of his wing. The Night Fury recovered, refocusing his attention on the water dragon just in time to dodge another incoming blast. Hiccup felt his head spin as he tried to come up with a way of taking the beast down. The Cauldron snarled, mouth gaping, fangs glittering in the morning sunlight.

"Hiccup!" a voice called.

Hiccup craned his head to look over his shoulder. Drifting about in the water, Tuffnut was wading among the waves, getting thrown about as the Cauldron's movements sent tremors through the surface. It didn't help he was clutching a spear in his hand, making it harder to keep himself above water. Fearing his friend would drown, Hiccup told Toothless they needed to fetch him.

Toothless neared, lowering himself slowly. Hiccup leaned over, reaching out a hand to try and help his friend.

"You know, as much as I love destruction, I don't think I want to see you eaten. Look out!" Tuffnut hollered, pointing with his free hand.

Toothless whipped around to see the Cauldron skimming through the water. The bright eyes shone with a desire to kill. Toothless roared,

beating his wings to rise up from its reach, but Hiccup remembered Tuffnut, stuck in the watery path of the dangerous creature.

"Tuffnut!" Hiccup called out.

Tuffnut nodded, "I got this!"

With the best strength he could muster, Tuffnut raised the spear up out of the water and then launched it forward. The weapon spun through the air, whirring, before striking a soft spot on the neck, breaking through the weak underscales and pushing through. The Cauldron let out a shriek of agony, wavering in its movements but still struggling to come forward, determination driving it onward. Tuffnut let out a cry of surprise and tried to kick out of the way, but wasn't fast enough.

"Toothless, now!" Hiccup ordered and the Night Fury unleashed a blast in the same spot that the spear had broken through.

The long, slender neck couldn't handle it. The fire broke through into the inside, breaking it away, severing the head. The head crashed into the ocean while the body slowed. Both masses began to sink, red plumes rising in the spots where the body parts vanished. The dark color began to spread through the ocean, enveloping it. Hiccup knew that it would soon draw in other dangerous creatures. He sought Tuffnut back out and called, "Get to shore!"

"Where's my sister?" Tuffnut asked, seeming out of breath but refusing to get to shore to take a break.

Toothless moaned, casting his head about as he searched for the girl that resembled the boy floundering in the water. He and Hiccup watched as Thornado burst from the ocean, having defeated his Cauldron, and came to settle back on Stoick's ship, which was practically on land. The chief was glancing back, examining the remaining ships and seeing the swells of the blood of the dead Cauldron. Hiccup let his gaze travel over the land and noticed that most of the people from the downed ships were clambering onto shore, coughing and sputtering. None of them was Ruffnut.

"Hiccup! Toothless!" a voice choked.

That was Ruffnut! She was a distance off and Tuffnut was splashing through the water to get to her all ready. She appeared to be sinking, her face struggling to keep above the surface, sucking in deep breaths with wide eyes. She was kicking wildly, but Hiccup couldn't see her arms moving. He and Toothless came soaring over, stopping not far above her.

Ruffnut went under for a moment before coming back to the surface, but just barely. Her helmet was gone and her braids floated out around her like tentacles. She spat seawater from her mouth, explaining, "Phlegma... she's drowning. I can't pull her up."

"I got you," Tuffnut responded, diving under beneath her.

Ruffnut tugged the body to the surface while Tuffnut pushed up from beneath. The woman was clearly unconscious, but still breathing. Ruffnut gulped down the air she was able to get greedily. "She got

knocked out when Thornado and that Cauldron's battle sent a stray piece of wood flying at her, hitting her on the head."

"Raise her arms above water. Toothless and I will take her to shore before we get back to the others. You two need to get to shore, too," Hiccup ordered.

Ruffnut and Tuffnut just nodded, unable to argue or think of anything better at that moment. The twins fought against the sea to raise the woman's arms, lifting them as high as they could into the air. Toothless was careful to get close without hitting them with his powerful downstrokes to stay aloft. The Night Fury grasped Phlegma's hands in his mighty paws and then pulled her up and out of the water. The twins, relieved of having to hold her, cheered, high-fiving each other with broad grins.

Hiccup bit his lip, "Don't cheer yet. Now get to shore!"

Toothless turned and started for the beach after Stoick and the fleet, dodging boulders as catapults began to fire from along the mountainside. Phlegma dangled beneath him and he heard a low moan. He craned his neck down to see if she was waking and saw her eyelids flutter before she began to gag, ocean water dribbling from her lips as it cleared her lungs. She hung limply until Toothless approached the shore, coming up alongside where Stoick's boat was now sliding onto land. The chief quickly flung himself off the ship and approached.

"Leave her here. She'll be good in just a moment. Get back to the other dragons," he ordered.

Hiccup nodded, padding Toothless' neck and the dragon gently set Phlegma down where she recomposed herself, though wobbly. The Night Fury then soared back up into the sky, flinging around another projectile from a catapult and then dipping up into the clouds. As he breached the top, he and Hiccup came face to face with trouble. Astrid, Hoark, Fishlegs, and Snotlout had ordered all the dragons to remain still and wait for the opportune moment before they would rain down on the mountain. Now, however, they found that that chance wouldn't come. About twenty seven dragons with Folk i Isen riders were swooping towards them through the air.

"Prepare yourselves!" Hiccup called out as he and Toothless regained altitude up beside Stormfly.

Astrid glanced out at him, "Hiccup, what was happening?"

"Some Cauldron were attacking the ships. Toothless, Tuffnut, and I took out one and Thornado handled the other. A lot of boats were damaged, but they've reached the shore," he tried to explain hurriedly, only turning to her briefly before facing the oncoming enemy again.

Behind him, he could hear Hoark growl, Snotlout cursing at himself for being scared, and Fishlegs whining. The rest of the dragon-mounted Vikings were silent, each taking the moment to prepare themselves mentally. The opponents were merely upon them now, claws of dragons and swords of men gleaming in the sunlight. Hiccup felt hot under his metal armor. He wished they were beneath the overcast sky, protected from the beams of golden rays that brought with them a

searing warmth. He bent over, hands tightening on his saddle hold. He hummed softly, feeling his lips tremble with his own noises. He continued to do so until he felt it was the perfect moment. Then he snapped himself upright, yanked on Toothless, who responded by pulling his body up and releasing a plasma fire. It whirled straight at the leader of the enemy, but the dragon just managed to dodge. The fire caused the attacking party to split into two groups.

"They're going to surround us!" Astrid hollered, watching as the two halves separated to go around the Berk army.

The villagers and dragons tossed about, trying to grab a hold of what was going on. The Folk i Isen weren't attacking, instead, looping around them before coming back around and taking off toward the Outcasts' Island. Hiccup, worried they were going to get away and attack the people on foot, shouted out for them all to follow.

Bursting forward, the dragons began to rain down, the Folk i Isen dragons still in two groups and leading the way under the clouds and nearer land. Toothless was catching up fast, the Night Fury's speed turning him into a dark blur that appeared above the mountain. Stormfly was close behind with the rest of the dragons sailing after them further back. Suddenly, the groups split and Toothless reared up, wings out wide to come to a stop. Hiccup twisted his body in his seat, screaming up to those following, "Split up and take them down!"

Beating his wings, Toothless veered to the right after one group of the enemy. After a moment, Hiccup once again glanced back, seeing that Astrid, Fishlegs, and about half of the dragon force was following him. At first, he was pleased, but then he realized that he wished Astrid was in the other group... Snotlout and Hoark were leading them.

\* \* \*

><p>"C'mon, Hookfang!" Snotlout encouraged, but was mostly trying to boost his own morale. He acted tough all the time. Reality? He was probably more timid than Fishlegs. He didn't want the others to know, however, and he was determined to not be seen as weak. So he found himself shouting at Hookfang every couple moments as a way of shouting at himself to ensure that he wouldn't back out of the mission.<p>

He didn't want this to be like last time. He could still feel the splitting headache when he thought about that moment on the cliff ledge, his skull getting cracked against the mountain behind him. Such agony and fear... Fear. He had heard that only the foolish didn't feel fear. Well, Snotlout sure felt it, but he wouldn't admit it on his life. So he strengthened his grip on Hookfang's horns, twisting his knuckles around them as if it might boost his dragon's speed. The Nightmare pressed through the air, beating after the half of the enemy dragons that they were following. Hoark and half of the Berk dragon riders were hot on their tail. Snotlout shifted in his saddle, perspiration dripping along his brows but ignoring it. He would lead this group to victory... For his dad! Man, Spitelout would be proud. Even Stoick would. And Hiccup.

Snotlout felt his stomach flip. Why was he seeking Hiccup's approval?

Hiccup should be looking for approval from him, the great and awesome Snotlout! That's what he was always telling his scrawny cousin. Always laughing at Hiccup and making fun of him and... well, being an all around jerk to him. But what else did Snotlout have going for himself? That was just it. That was why Snotlout wanted Hiccup's approval.

Never on his life would he let his cousin know that. Or Stoick. Or even Spitelout if he was still alive. Tears trembled in his eyes. Gods, he was such a wimp! Why couldn't he have something going for him? Fishlegs was smart, like book-smart, Astrid was gorgeous, athletic, tough, kind, and all sorts of things, and Hiccup had this weird way of just knowing and understanding and helping dragons. Even the twins had something... some sort of creepy affinity for destruction and dumbness.

What was Snotlout?

Just the other guy who wished he was as tough as Astrid, who wanted to pretend he was as smart as Fishlegs, who thought he could be as dumb and destructive as the twins (sometimes he could be, but deep down he was, unfortunately, a big baby and did have a brain), and who acted like he was better than the Dragon Trainer.

So if he could accomplish this, without Hiccup's help, maybe he could be something. A leader. A warrior. A viking...

Snapping back to attention, Snotlout squinted his eyes. The cold air surging past him made them watery and frigid. He blinked, feeling a couple tears escape at the movement. He finally released a horn and wiped at his eyes, trying to clear his vision. He peered harder, noticing that the enemy was disappearing into the caves on the far side of the island, away from the land battle. Well, Snotlout wasn't going to let them get away! He waved for everyone to pursue and then they all flung into the caves after the Folk i Isen on their dragons.

Hookfang landed and scrambled along the cave, unable to continue flying. Most of the other dragons had to copy, but a couple Nadders and Gronckles remained airborne. The echoing sounds of claws scrabbling against rock and the beating of wings seemed to drown out any other noise. Hookfang sped through the caves, but after a couple minutes, began to slow, roaring softly.

Snotlout felt his heart drumming in his chest. He had no idea where the enemy was. He also didn't know where they were. These caves were unfamiliar to him. They were deep, dark, and had water dripping out of cracks and pooling at the dragons' feet. Only a couple torches provided pale light, but they were far between, leaving long zones of gaping darkness. Hookfang stood in the envelopment of a torch, making angry clicking noises. Everyone had gone silent and all the dragons were now on foot, all trying to listen for any sounds of the enemy. Snotlout shivered and saw his breath curl around his face.

"We need to get out of here," Hoark said from behind him.

Snotlout nodded, tapping Hookfang lightly to let his dragon know they needed to head the other way. Back the way they came to get out of here. It was like a dungeon...

A tremendous shriek suddenly broke through the world. Snotlout clamped his hands over his ears, crying out in distress as his head rattled. Hookfang recoiled beneath him and he nearly got flung off since he had let go of the Nightmare's horns.

As soon as the pounding in his head stopped, he looked around at the others, then back forward. The cry split the air again, forcing the Berk dragons to back away before turning and fleeing. As Hookfang skidded over the ground after the others, Snotlout called out to Hoark, "What is that?"

"Sounds like a Thunderdrum!"

Snotlout felt the blood drain from his face. He dared a look back to where the scream had come from, but he couldn't see anything through the darkness. He flinched, knowing quite well that Alvin's dragon had been a Thunderdrum. Or still was a Thunderdrum. He had heard that the beast survived with Alvin.

The dragons before him suddenly veered, curving down a new tunnel that Snotlout was pretty certain they hadn't taken to get in. He tried to slow Hookfang down, but a boom splintered the air and the Nightmare refused to listen, thrusting forward at a lurching speed. Snotlout clung to the horns, fearful of being left behind if he was thrown off. As the dragons continued to press forward, the cries became more frequent and seemed scattered. Somehow, the Thunderdrum was herding them down certain tunnels, steering the dragons currently in the lead by sending his ear-shattering roar down the tunnels that he didn't want them to go down. Hoark was the first to realize this and his face took on a look of one who was struck with a sudden illness.

"We're being led right into a trap," the man growled.

Only Snotlout heard and, by then, it was too late. Hookfang and the Nadder that Hoark rode stumbled to halt as they nearly crashed into the backs of the dragons they had been following. Hookfang grumbled under his breath, craning his head back to look up and around. They were all congregated in a dead end, trapped just as Hoark had figured. There were no torches, the spherical room barely lit by the light that filtered in through the cave they had just traveled through. Villagers cried out in alarm once they recognized the situation and dragons roared with displeasure. The group began to wheel around, intending to escape before they were doomed.

As Hookfang turned all the way around, Snotlout felt his innards coil. There, standing at the entrance of their escape, was a crimson scaled Thunderdrum. Blood Cry. His smile was wicked. A devilish grin that stretched across his whole face. The fangs that protruded out seemed sharper, giving the whole ordeal a menacing feeling. Snotlout felt the fear he had tried to bury in him begin to rise from the pit in his body. It reeked and he shivered, but he could have easily blamed it on the chill that seemed eternal in the mountain.

Snotlout grimaced, "Get him, Hookfang!"

Hookfang released a spew of fire at the beast, but it jumped back, just dodging. Swelling up, Hookfang didn't have time to react before Blood Cry unleashed a devastating blow to the ceiling of the escape tunnel. He repeated this another time, forcing Hookfang to remain

still or be caught in the blast. Snotlout and Hoark watched as the ceiling crumbled, chipping and breaking. Finally, it gave in, collapsing. The tail of Blood Cry was the last flash of color that they all saw before they were surrounded by darkness, the exit and their source of light now blocked by a cave-in of rocks.

\* \* \*

><p>Stoick heard Ruffnut's cry and spun around to see Phlegma's nearby ship being cracked in two. A steaming blast of water had broken up through the hull, completely shattering the boat. The people on board were sent this way and that, flung into the ocean like they were nothing more than worms to be picked off by a bird. He felt his eyes widen when he realized that Ruffnut and Tuffnut had also been on the ship, though he had thought they would be on their dragon. He didn't have time for fury however, as three more boats were destroyed only a moment after, the two Cauldron that were moving beneath the fleet wasting no time.</p>

"Thornado!" Stoick ordered, turning to his dragon, which was riding his boat with him instead of working with the dragon squad.

The Thunderdrum clicked in acknowledgement before taking to the water, vanishing under the torrential waves that now shook the boats. Stoick gripped the side rail for support, glancing to the sky to see Toothless and Hiccup arriving on the scene. The two had noticed Thornado go for one Cauldron so they appeared to be seeking out the second.

Satisfied the dragons would be taken care of, Stoick roared to his people of the remaining ships, "Keep moving forward! We have to get to land! The others will swim to shore."

It wasn't long, it seemed, before Thornado returned. By then, Stoick's ship was nearly to the shore. Many of the people who had been on the destroyed boats were all ready making it to shore, their powerful bodies able to get them through the water faster than the hulking ships. Stoick couldn't help but watch them with an ache. They had been doing their job, of course, and they had accepted the risks, but it still frustrated him when his people were put into a danger that he couldn't assist them. It all ready tortured him knowing that many of his people were in the air above him, led by his son, who actually wasn't even up there with them at the moment.

Swiveling his head around to check on his son, he could see the Night Fury hovering over the waves. The water beneath the dragon swirled with dark crimson, revealing to Stoick that his son and the dragon had somehow defeated the other monster that had attacked the Berk army.

The boat to the right of Stoick's ship lumbered nearer. Gobber was on this ship, the Bone Knapper perched on the mast at the top. The beast cried out in surprise and Stoick peered up to see what had spooked the great dragon. A boulder was soaring through the air, whizzing by and nearly hitting Gobber's ship, but it had just maneuvered out of the way. The Bone Knapper hissed, releasing one of its powerful roars. It grabbed at the air with its wings, looking at Thornado, who nodded and took to the air beside the other dragon. The two circled in the air, catching the attention of the enemies wielding the catapults.

"They're distracting them," Gobber announced.

Stoick nodded, well aware of the plan by now. His warrior dragon was intelligent. He was not surprised that the dragon would do something like this. It was also pleasing to see the Bone Knapper show such loyalty despite the fact that it did not even live on Berk. It had merely come back to help with the battle, risking its life to help them out of friendship and kindness. Stoick was thankful that Gobber had befriended it and not killed it.

Finally, the boats lumbered onto land, sliding up on the sand with rough whines. At that same moment, Toothless came over, Hiccup on his back and Phlegma clutched in his grip. The dragon was slowly lowering the woman to land and Stoick threw himself off his boat and onto the shore. He headed over, nearing the Night Fury and his son. He peered up, shouting, "Leave her here. She'll be good in just a moment. Get back to the other dragons."

Phlegma was set on the shore and then Toothless took off. Stoick winced, a wry smile playing on his face. It made him nervous, to see his son in the midst of battle, but he had been unable to deny the fact that Hiccup and his friends could be useful in battle from the backs of their dragons. As the two vanished into the film of clouds, he turned back to the mountain, feeling a sense of dread settle over him. Thornado and the Bone Knapper were still dodging boulders in the sky.

Gobber came up alongside Stoick while Phlegma recovered, seeming dazed but unharmed. Stoick cast his gaze about over his people, all who were prepared, weapons drawn and sweat dripping. Reaching for his own sword, Stoick grumbled under his breath, wrapping a beefy hand around the hilt and drawing it forth. He scanned the mountain, eyes narrowing as it suddenly dawned on him how organized the enemies were. As if they had known all along that this attack would come...

Upon one of the high ledges, Stoick could see three forms. The form in the front was dark and bulky, a sneer clear. Alvin laughed, seeming joyful, which sent rage bursting through Stoick's veins. The man who threatened his people. The man who tried to kill his son. The man who killed his brother. Beside Alvin, flanking him on the right and left, Hella and Frosne were watching, stiff and fierce. Just the sight of them beside Alvin made the anger boiling in Stoick stir harder, madly flowing through his entire being until he could no longer contain it. The enemies were in the caves. It was time to end this!

Unleashing a belting war cry, Stoick raised his sword and pounded forward, legs pushing him with flares of adrenaline. His people, climbing onto the shore and stumbling off of the ships, echoed his call and the pulsing of feet hitting the sandy ground could be heard thundering behind him. Then they dove headfirst into the caves.

\* \* \*

><p>Ruffnut turned from high-fiving her brother and saw that Toothless was sailing away, leaving her and her twin to swim to shore. She smirked, feeling accomplished. They were still alive and they had even saved someone. They were doing better than she could have hoped.

Spinning her arms like a windmill, she began to pull herself through the water, feet kicking out behind her to help her move to the shore. Behind her, Tuffnut mimicked her movements.<p>

The water darkened and, at first, Ruffnut feared there was another Cauldron beneath them. She stopped swimming, trying to figure out what it was. Then, as she pulled a hand from the water to wipe away some hair that was clinging to her scarred cheek, she discovered what it was. Her hand dripped crimson, thick and smelling absolutely horrendous. She shivered, suddenly feeling disgusting and, though she didn't particularly care for them, wanted to bathe. Making a face, she forced herself to keep moving to shore, trying to ignore the fact that she was moving through the pool of Cauldron blood. She held her head as high out of the water, the putrid smell filling her nose and making her head spin. She thought for a brief moment she would throw up, but managed to hold it back.

"This is gross. Even for our standards," Tuffnut choked from nearby, kicking harder to get to the shore faster.

Ruffnut couldn't even respond. She didn't want any of it to get into her mouth, so she kept her mouth clamped shut and refused to respond. She spotted the edge of the red bath and sped up her movements, hoping to be free of what felt like she was in a pot of gruel. Upon reaching the clear, green-blue waters, her mouth opened and an outpouring of breath came out. She hadn't even realized she had been holding her breath.

She was thinking about how nice it was to be out of the murk when she heard Tuffnut screech, "Look out, Ruff!"

A shadow passed over her and Ruffnut swung her face up just in time to see the boulder of a catapult sailing towards her. She felt only a flash of fear before she dove under in an attempt to get out of its way. She went down a couple feet before her lungs burned with the desire for air, having been working overtime when she was holding Phlegma up and then from holding her breath while passing through the blood. She arched herself to swim back to the surface, but suddenly felt an impact hit her back that started pressing her down. The boulder!

Shocked, she lost the air she had in her body in a cry. She wiggled around under the boulder, managing to turn so that it pressed down against her stomach and not her back. It was heavy, even under water, and her body was nearly wrapped around it, making it difficult to pull away. Her back was throbbing with pain, the impact having probably bruised it, and she was growing weak without air. She scrambled, pushing herself away finally and out into the emptiness of the ocean.

By now, her head spun. She was in pain and she felt sick. Her muscles refused to work, succumbing to the cold of the ocean. Her body tried to take a breath. She started to inhale some salt water, but stopped herself. She feebly grabbed at water above her, searching for something to pull her to the surface. She didn't want to die! Not now! She was terrified... Never had she been so scared. But then again, never had things seemed so empty around her. She'd always had Tuffnut nearby. And if she wasn't with him she was with Astrid. She had never been so alone...

Her hands reached up once more, hoping something was there. That Odin would spare her.

She felt something grab her hand, but couldn't see through the pale grey darkness of the ocean, no sun out to illuminate the crystal waters. It only took her a second to recognize Tuffnut's grip, a grip she knew as well as her own. She kicked, feeling renewed energy as her lungs burst into flames, needing, desiring, and hungry to get the air that Tuffnut would help her find. He brother pulled her up and, soon, she breached the surface, feeling a fresh coolness settle in her body as the flames of her lungs were doused by the air they had so desperately sought.

Tuffnut was coughing and shaking his head. "Man you are dumb! Why in the world would you try to almost drown like that? You scared me!"

"I scared you?"

Tuffnut pursed his lips, seeming mad. After a moment, his face relaxed, however, and he shrugged. "You're my sister... We fight, yeah. But we're still friends. Aren't we?"

Ruffnut just smiled. She didn't do mushy things like that. All she knew is that, right now, she was just grateful she had a brother like Tuffnut. Dumbest boy ever, but her brother none the less. A friend, too. He was right about that. She turned back to the shore and continued on, ignoring the drumming of pain in her back and the agony her lungs and muscles were feeling. She could see the army driving into the caves now. They needed to get there and help.

And so she swam. And Tuffnut followed. He always would.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup couldn't figure out what the Folk i Isen were doing. They were just... fleeing. Toothless would be just about to catch up to them or he would fire a plasma shot, but then the enemies would veer left or spin up or dive right. It was infuriating in a way. What kind of enemy wouldn't even fight?</p>

In the back of his mind, Hiccup flinched. An enemy with a plan. Something was up. They were doing something, but what? Hiccup couldn't figure it out. He couldn't see that far ahead to figure out what they had up their sleeves. His fists clenched around the handle of the saddle. His fingers, cold from the air speeding by, ached from the squeezing, blood trapped in its place. He grimaced, glancing back to look at Astrid. She was staring ahead with determination, seeming unfazed by the continuous goose chase. Hiccup couldn't even see Fishlegs, the boy and his Gronckle back far behind with the others, who were struggling to keep up with the Night Fury, Stormfly, and the maneuvering enemy dragons.

"Toothless, keep a sharp eye out," Hiccup warned his best friend.

The dragon beneath him dipped his head to let Hiccup know he had heard. Toothless glanced left and right, bright eyes searching across the landscape for anything out of place, but the dragon couldn't see anything. His elongated scales quivered, a sense of unease settling

over him. Hiccup's words had been foreboding and, now that the boy had said something, Toothless could feel that something was amiss. This seemed... odd. He slowed down some instinctively, allowing himself more of a chance to really examine the world about him, as if Skrill might come speeding from the sky above or Changewings would appear from the shadows of the mountain and rain acid at them. His drop in pace allowed Stormfly to catch up.

Astrid, confused, asked, "What's up? We won't catch them at this pace."

"I don't think we're going to catch them. Astrid, something doesn't seem right."

As soon as the words left his mouth, Hiccup, Astrid, Toothless, and Stormfly watched as the enemy dispersed, scattering all different directions and heading one way or another to vanish behind rocky plateaus coming up from the ocean. The place gave an eerie feeling of familiar. Ahead, one lone enemy dragon and rider settled down on a spit of land attached to the mountain island. A large, circular hole in the ground that was as deep as a Nightmare was tall gaped before the enemy. The man upon the dragon's back sneered and seemed to brace himself, as if he would take on Hiccup and the others all by himself with only the dragon beneath him to help.

Toothless came down, alighting on the land inside the giant round hole. It had a flat bottom and something about being inside it seemed way to...

"Hiccup!" Astrid hissed.

Fishlegs and all the others finally arrived, their dragons coming down to land in a mass behind Toothless and Stormfly in the hole. Hiccup turned and stared at them all behind him. The men and women looked ready to fight, some scoffing at the lone enemy that stood with the dragon on the ledge before them. The dragons they rode, however, chirped nervously. Stormfly and Meatlug seemed especially antsy, the two cast their heads about with wide, haunted eyes. They shifted about wildly. Fishlegs had to wrap his arms around Meatlug's head to keep from getting tossed off.

"Hiccup!" Astrid said again and Hiccup turned to her. "This place is just like our kill ring back on Berk!"

It struck Hiccup then. That was why the place gave him such a familiar feeling. Why Meatlug and Stormfly were nervous. Both had been trapped in their kill ring back on Berk for so long, and now they were in another one. This one was not being used to help train dragons now, though. Hiccup had a feeling this one, the Outcasts' kill ring, was still being used for just what it was named for. He froze, then moaned. They had just fallen into the trap.

And at that moment, giant nets made of metal chain links came crashing down upon them as all the enemy dragons returned. Hiccup felt the metal crash on top of him. The weight forced Toothless, Stormfly, and the others to fall to the ground with cries of surprise. Hiccup peered up through one of the links at the enemy who sat upon his dragon before them. He was laughing, eyes glittering with victory.

"Kill them all," the man chuckled, as if it was the punchline of a poorly done joke.

\* \* \*

><p>WHOO... x3</p>

Now we're getting to my favorite parts. The next couple chapters are my favorites. I'm pumped for them. But they'll probably be super long. Hopefully I won't take a month to post them like this chapter took, but they will require a couple days of work so that I can make them perfect for you guys ^^

Pardon any spelling or grammar mistakes I missed. My keyboard is struggling on me so sometimes my letters don't always work...

o.o

Review please! Y'all get me super excited every time you leave me something and I'm about to surpass 100, that makes me feel so wonderful! Just no flames, por favor.

Also, I'm thinking of trying a Rise of the Guardians one-shot soon. So if any of you liked that movie, maybe you'd be interested xD

Love,

Deyoxis

#### 14. Try so Hard to Fail so Miserably

Back at college and beginning classes again. I thought that would be good for this story because I usually write between classes... Wasn't planning on the workload at all x3

\*\*SongoftheDarquePhoenix:\*\* I'm trying not to bog down chapters with too much emotion that I might talk about in another chapter. It'll end up being quite redundant and annoying. After looking over my outline, most of the emotional aftermath dealings will come from some of the later chapters so don't worry, it's all coming!

I hate odd numbers so part of me is annoyed at myself for having nineteen chapters planned, but there just isn't another reason to make a chapter after that as of right now, haha.

\*\*Congrats to Theresaw2010 for being my 100th reviewer, haha xD And mega-hugs for Alethea 13, Quirky Revelations, Anony mouse101, clay, Pewter Griffon, KaliAnn, 20 minutes, Wolf of IndigoRiver, SongoftheDarquePhoenix, and starr1095. You guys are way too sweet! You could seriously be my only readers and I wouldn't mind because your kindness and dedication just make me so happy and keep my inspiration to write this story so high!\*\*

And I'm also quite happy that you all enjoyed my idea with Snotlout. I really enjoy him as a character with something deeper to him... I honestly can't believe he's nothing but a jerk.

Now, after the long wait, onwards!

#### \*\*Chapter Fourteen: Try so Hard to Fail so Miserably\*\*

The metal chains were heavy and ice cold. The links rested along Hiccup's back, pressing against his plate armor and pinning him down against Toothless, hands still on the handle of the saddle and right cheek resting on the Night Fury's neck. He grunted with frustration, glad the armor was there to protect his scrawny back from bruising under the weight. He tried to shift his body around to see what was going on. He peered up through the gaps in the net and saw it rolling and shaking as the masses of dragons and people beneath it struggled to try and free themselves. Hissing with irritation, Hiccup realized that hoping to throw the net off would do no good. Toothless was remaining still, as if waiting for Hiccup to come up with a plan.

Stormfly's cry suddenly rang in Hiccup's ears and he nearly smacked himself. Fire, duh! He managed to twist his head in the direction of the Nadder, hoping Astrid would be able to hear him. Or even Fishlegs.

"Astrid! Fishlegs! Can you hear me? Tell your dragons to blast the net if they can! Try to shoot up, though, so that we don't accidentally hit each other," he called out, feeling the strength of his voice rub his throat, having never really shouted so loudly before.

He then released the handle of his saddle, which was under his stomach. He moved his hands up and then around Toothless' neck, unable to lift them due to the chains. Once his hands were wrapped around Toothless as much as they could, Hiccup spoke softly to his dragon, encouragingly saying, "All right, bud. Can you raise your head to shoot up? We need to get out of this!"

At that moment, the shrill scream of a dragon pierced the air. The Berk dragons, trapped under the net, began to shriek with violent rage and fear. Toothless bucked when a nearby dragon under the net flung through and nearly collided with him. The Night Fury whined at the dragon, a Nightmare, but the creature refused to listen, thrashing about under the links and leaving its poor rider to cling to its neck in desperation.

Hiccup couldn't see what was going on or why the sudden outburst occurred. He resumed his focus to Toothless, tugging his best friend's neck to try and help him lift his great head. Toothless growled with determination, neck muscles pushing against the chains, ignoring the slapping of them on his nose as the net moved about under the flailing of trapped beasts. Once his head was lifted enough, Toothless sucked in a breath, gas billowing in his throat before his blast shot up, ripping apart a hole in the net as chain links shattered and melted. With room to reach through, Toothless used his forearms to pry the hole wider, breaking apart more links to create a gap large enough to escape.

As Toothless was about to fling himself through the hole, an enemy dragon launched on top of them. Now Hiccup not only had the chains pressing against him, but the foot of a Nadder was stomping onto the chains. Hiccup could feel his plate armor all ready indenting under the force. His back screamed in agony and he wanted to cry out, but

he couldn't draw in a breath. Toothless shrieked with fury, scratching and clawing at the ground to try and pull them out from underneath the enemy through to their freedom. The air was exploding in noise, but Hiccup couldn't distinguish anything and his eyesight was starting to blur with the lack of oxygen.

The weight lifted at that moment and Toothless dove forward, through the gap he had made in the net. Unfortunately, a claw of the Nadder hooked through the net and under Hiccup's armor. As the Nadder was tossed back by an opponent and Toothless went forward, Hiccup was ripped from his dragon. The cords that attached him to the saddle snapped. His left leg just managed to dislodge, but the sudden jerk of the movement caused the bindings to stretch some and so his prosthetic was left to just barely cling to his leg.

The Nadder came crashing down, bringing Hiccup with him. The impact left Hiccup feeling like his whole body had shattered. He ached, especially the shoulder he had come crashing down upon. He was still under the net and the Nadder's opponent was viciously ripping at it from on top of the net. Hiccup, fighting past the pain, began to squirm violently, trying to dislodge his armor from the Nadder's claw. When it seemed hopeless, he bit his lip bitterly before reaching down and untying the plates from around his body. He slipped out, crawling beneath the net to try and find Toothless, hardly able to maneuver. His dry throat didn't want to speak, but he found himself crying out for his best friend, knowing the Night Fury would hear him. He pushed up with his might, trying to stand underneath the net. He was all ready shaky since his prosthetic was still hanging limply from his knee and it didn't help when the net thrashed suddenly, throwing him to the ground and reawakening the pain that had begun to beat about in his body. Some Berk dragons were still caught beneath the net and enemies on top weren't helping. Hiccup cried out again, fearful he would be trampled. If he was then Toothless wouldn't be able to fly. If Toothless couldn't fly, he would be vulnerable... And Hiccup was not about to let that happen to his best friend!

An explosion to his right caused heat to wash over him and red to blaze across his vision. It cooled as suddenly as it happened and Hiccup was able to crawl to the opening it created. He felt light as soon as the net was removed from on top of him and he glanced up from hands and knees to see Meatlug hovering up above, Fishlegs looking down with a worried expression drawn over his face. The large boy was clutching Meatlug's saddle to the point that his knuckles were fiercely white and he almost seemed that he was about to be sick.

"Hiccup, are you okay?"

"Just super," Hiccup lied, spinning to sit on his butt and speedily making to tighten the bindings of his leg. He winced, the skin around his knee raw from being scraped by the wrapping as it was removed. He was in poor shape... "Where's Toothless?"

His green eyes peered back up as Fishlegs pointed. Hiccup cast about in that direction and noticed Toothless wrestling with a rather portly Nightmare. The creature certainly had size and weight against the Night Fury, but Toothless didn't hold back, slashing out with extended claws and snapping his jaw, teeth clear against his pink gums. It was a fight that made the one between Toothless and Hookfang

in the kill ring that while ago seem civil. Crimson splattered the ground beneath the two conflicting beasts like paint and Hiccup could only prey to Odin that it was the Nightmare's.

Assured that his prosthetic was fine, Hiccup stood and tried to dash over the net to his friend. It shifted, tripping him up. He caught himself, scraping red smears across his palms from the rough ground. He hissed in annoyance, the net becoming more of an irritation than a hinderance at this point. His legs protested, but he regained his footing and ducked under the blast of a Gronckle. Between the pain and fear, Hiccup tried to just focus on his determination to return to Toothless. The wails of dragons around him and the cries of men and women were ignored. He couldn't think about that now. He was in too much danger. Toothless was in too much danger.

Toothless spun around and crashed his tail into the side of the Nightmare's face. Hiccup felt a shred of fear, hoping it wouldn't break the tail fin, but it seemed unharmed. The Nightmare stumbled to the side, giving Hiccup the time to run over and pull himself onto Toothless' back. He reached to strap himself on but was reminded that the cords were snapped. He cursed, latching in his prosthetic. He snatched the handle before him and put all his strength into holding on lest he be thrown off.

"You okay, Bud?" Hiccup questioned now that he felt somewhat secure.

Toothless craned his head about and snorted reassuringly. Hiccup took a quick once-over and saw no visible injuries to his friend aside from a shallow cut down the front right of Toothless's nose. It barely bled, a shimmer of red among the dark black of scales. Hiccup released a sigh and nodded, letting Toothless know they could take to the sky at that moment. Toothless beat his wings and they were airborne. Hiccup tossed his head about, trying to take in the scene. Most of the Berk riders and dragons had escaped and were battling in the sky, fire shooting through the air. A couple were still trapped beneath the net, enemies pounding on top of them, taking advantage of their inability to move. A couple still bodies were strewn about, even a Viking or two. The motionless beings caused a fuel of fury in Hiccup, who quickly ordered Toothless they help the dragons still trapped beneath the net.

The Night Fury screeched in agreement, plunging down and ramming into a Gronckle that had another pinned down. The force of the hit caused Hiccup to lurch forward and so he pulled himself close to his friend's body, fingers tightening on the handle. He had no intention of being thrown off again.

Hiccup watched the Gronckle, thrown off balance, go crashing to the ground, rolling and crushing its Folk i Isen rider beneath him. The man survived, but was injured enough that he limply let go of the Gronckle and lay upon the ground, dazed and gasping for breath. Toothless ignored him, aiming a spit of fire at the dragon. The Gronckle yelped and took off while Toothless launched at another nearby enemy attacking a trapped Nightmare.

It took some time, but with the help of Fishlegs and Meatlug who came to help, Hiccup and Toothless managed to help free all the rest of the trapped dragons. The net lay upon the ground, burning red where fire had broken apart holes, bumped where bodies that couldn't make

it out resided, and bloodied where dragons' scales were torn or their fleshy underbelly was exposed and scored by claws. Hiccup steered Toothless after an enemy when a sudden cry caught his attention.

Now, the air was filled with shrieks and screams all around him, but this cry was different. It was Stormfly. And it was not a cry of triumph or strength or battle. It was one of pain and desperation. Hiccup felt like his heart almost stopped as his mind trailed to Astrid, hoping to Odin that didn't mean she was injured or... dead.

Toothless was the first to see the Nadder and veered in her direction in such a mighty whip that Hiccup felt his shoulders yank as his body was almost flung one way but his hands gripped the dragon to go another. He groaned, the cold air slipping by his face and he peered through a sparkle of tears forming from the wind in his eyes to see the blue Nadder. Stormfly wasn't flying and was backing up to avoid the vicious jaws of dragons that went after her. She shuddered, clearly in agony, but ran out of room to back up. Astrid wasn't on her back and Hiccup couldn't see the blond viking female anywhere among the mess. So he was left to watch with horror as Stormfly, with no where to go, tumbled over the edge, clawing at air, then plummeting to the ocean below.

Toothless called out to her. He drove his wings harder, zipping over the cliff edge and then heading straight down, intending to go after the fallen Nadder. Hiccup's eyes widened at the realization of what they were doing, but he didn't order Toothless to stop. He braced himself for the water, sucking in a deep breath before he and the Night Fury were beneath the surface, enveloped by an endless void of shifting cold.

\* \* \*

><p>The darkness of the cave made it seem like a tomb. There was light filtering in somehow, though. Pale and hazy, it wasn't much, but it was just enough for Hoark and Snotlout to see the rubble that had trapped them and their party in the cave. Many of the vikings were clawing and tugging, attempting to pull free a stone that might bring an opening they could escape through. They gave up after a few moments so many of the dragons stepped forward, scraping against the stone to try and dislodge something. A dragon finally pulled a boulder away, but it only ended up causing a pile of rubble to come cascading down and nearly hit a couple of the vikings standing too close.</p>

"It's no use," Hoark muttered bitterly, shaking his head at what was once their only exit.

Snotlout's hands shifted between balled up fists to clammy palms. His blood felt boiling hot and he ran up, kicking angrily at a boulder that trapped them. It resulted in nothing but a flare of pain shooting up his leg. He grabbed at his foot, a squeak of pain emitting from his throat before he clamped his mouth shut, trying not to betray himself. Panic was pulsing in his bones. He trembled, finally setting his foot back down and walking back and forth alongside the rubble, searching and hoping that there was something they could do. He couldn't be trapped down here! How could he prove anything if he was stuck here... how could he prove anything if he

was to die here?

He bent down, snatching up a smooth stone and throwing it with a burst of madness. It hit against the cave wall and just clattered to the ground, the noise echoing repeatedly around them. "I'm not ready to die!"

The vikings and dragons around him silenced. All of them felt a shiver run through their bodies as they contemplated Snotlout's words. They all agreed. Though they had come to put their lives on the line for Berk, no one was truly ready to die. Especially not just from being trapped in a cave. That was not the death of a warrior. It was pitiful, pathetic.

Snotlout was breathing heavily from the loss of concentration. He just wanted to punch something. He began to beat at a rock, putting his anger and determination into each blow. The rock did not yield and when Snotlout finally felt drained, his fits were covered in crimson splotches and bruised. He shook, tears stinging at his eyes as he examined the way the light glittered off the red of his knuckles. As he examined them, he suddenly found his gaze seeking out the source of the light. He got down on his hands and knees, stumbling into a crawl before he spotted the gap. Somehow, someway, the rocks had fallen just right to create a gap through to the other side. A gap just big enough for a viking teen to get through.

Never had Snotlout wished he was more of Hiccup's size. But he knew he could do it even if he wasn't. He started forward, moving under the boulders, wondering if they might give out and come crashing on top of him at any moment. Hoark called out to him and he heard Hookfang's whine of distress but he didn't stop. "I can escape... I'll get help!"

If he didn't, then Hookfang, Hoark, and all the others might be doomed.

He reached a particularly tight squeeze in the gap. His hands reached for anything to help pull himself through, kicking his feet out on the ground, jamming his toes and fighting to push on. Eventually, he shot out, crashing to his stomach. He was only a couple feet from the exit now and hurriedly made his way out. As he stood up, now free of the cave and back in the tunnel, Snotlout felt a small thrill of success. So caught up, he did not even realize he was not alone until he felt a slam in his back that sent him back down to his hands and knees. He bit his lip to hold back the cry. He tried to stand back up, noticing the red palm print stains his hands left upon the grey stone.

His gaze travled up to see Alvin, Hella, and Blood Cry. Alvin was laughing at him, brutally close and eyes glittering with fire. The man knocked him again and Snotlout was soon back upon the floor of the tunnel. He groaned, trying to push past the agony and the dread that was consuming him as his eyes met the dark gaze of Alvin. The man approached, reaching down and grasping Snotlout's shirt in his fist. He yanked the boy up and hoisted him in the air. Snotlout kicked his feet out, trying to get Alvin to release him, but none of his attacks seemed to even bother Alvin. The Outcast sneered and then tossed Snotlout to Hella. The woman let him fall, watching him grimace with pain and fear before she then picked him up.

"We come back to see what good of a job Blood Cry has done and we find that the wimpiest boy on Berk has escaped. So you're the big rescue plan, aren't you?" Alvin snickered.

Hella forced Snotlout to turn and face Alvin, who came forward, pressing his face into Snotlout's and letting his breath wash over the viking teen. Snotlout winced, trying to look away, but was unable. His mouth was dry, but he just managed to get a glob of spit into Alvin's beard as he fired back, "I'm not a wimp!"

"Really? Even puny Hiccup's been more of a threat to me than you have ever been," Alvin stated, pulling back and wiping his grimy hands at his beard to remove the saliva. "Aren't you the one that one of my men knocked out in the first couple minutes of just talking to you that first time we captured you and your friends? At least those twins put up a fight... Though I suppose you didn't faint like the fat kid, I'll give you that."

Snotlout felt humiliation run over him. His face colored, both with embarrassment and vexation. He twisted about in Hella's grip like he made to do something but there was nothing he could do and the woman held him too tightly. His eyes shot over to see Blood Cry nearby, the Thunder Drum standing with a smirk across his wide face. Snotlout felt a wave of tiredness take hold of him and he dangled in Hella's hands. The woman snarled with annoyance.

"Take him to the meeting room. He can be the witness to Stoick's death. I'll meet you back there after Frosne gets a hold of the chief," Alvin ordered to Hella, voice snapping through the cave before he made off, Blood Cry following.

Hella began to drag Snotlout along. Snotlout stumbled along without protest. He took the woman in, her blond hair, her sharp eyes, her fierce aura about her. His father had once been friends with her. She had once had a good side to her. Maybe it was still there.

"Why would you do this?" Snotlout muttered. "My father was your friend!"

Hella paused, turning and sending a palm across Snotlout's cheek in a slap. It stung and he reached up, touching the welt tenderly before turning back to her. Her eyes narrowed. "Your father betrayed me! He's the reason I was exiled. He may have been my friend for a bit, but he sure changed sides quickly."

"You killed a child! I like breaking things and punching Hiccup but... to kill someone!"

Hella sneered. "You have no idea what I went through boy."

"No, but my father did and now he's dead because of the man you're helping!" Snotlout fired back.

"Your father deserved to die. A weak man."

Rage. Snotlout found himself smashing a fist into Hella's gut. It was hardly strong enough to knock the breath from her, but she did stumble and grunt with surprise. "My father was a great man and died the death of a true warrior unlike you and Alvin will. You will die as traitors and murderers!"

Snotlout wasn't the brightest. His comebacks weren't the best. But he knew one thing was for certain. In this case... he was actually right. And Hella was wrong. And Alvin was wrong. And Frosne was wrong. They were all wrong. They were all monsters. And they would die as such.

Hella snatched the collar of his shirt in her hand and yanked him along.

\* \* \*

><p>"Stoick, come back here!" Gobber's voice called to him.</p>

The viking chief hardly minded his friend. His feet carried him after Frosne. The evil man was getting too far ahead. At this rate, Stoick would lose him in the caves and be separated from his tribe. That would do no good. He had to get the coward and cut him down. Cut him down immediately and watch his blood stain the ground for what he had done to Berk. Frosne would die. Now. Stoick relished the idea of taking down this man. This enemy. This beast. So caught up in his revenge, he could no longer hear Gobber's protests and Phlegma's warnings. He was too far gone. Both in his mind and in the caves.

"Frosne, stop and fight me," Stoick roared.

Frosne just glanced back, smiling sickly and winking like it was all some sort of game. The man continued to run along, dodging puddles of water and spinning down into random tunnels. Stoick charged after him, refusing to give up. His men were fighting because of this horrid man, Alvin, and Hella. Stoick's men and women were dying because of this horrid man, Alvin, and Hella. So Stoick would make sure this was ended. As soon as possible.

He raised his sword, catching up to the Folk i Isen leader as some as his determination pushed him forward with a greater and stronger drive. Stoick swung the sword, but Frosne ducked and slipped into another tunnel. Stoick's sword clattered against the side of the tunnel as Stoick missed and he hissed. He scored the wall with his weapon for good measure, chipping a line in the stone before he resumed his pursuit of the treacherous man he intended to kill.

The tunnels were growing dimmer. Shadows were deepening, the few torches that lined the way flickering just enough to light the way. The shadows of Stoick and Frosne flashed upon the walls, large figures that lunged slowly into the heart of the mountain of Outcast Island. The puddles in the tunnels became more frequent and Stoick hardly bothered to dodge them any more, splashing through their dark reflections, soaking the bottom of his pants with the icy liquid. The dripping around him steadily increased and aside from the heavy breathing and ferocious stomping of himself and his enemy, it seemed that Stoick's ears were drumming with the sound of dripping water that pooled along the floor of the tunnel.

Suddenly, they entered a cave. Small, round, and with a chill that seemed endless. Stoick slowed, pausing to take in the cave. There wasn't much to it. That's when he noticed it, however. It seemed like a large puddle, but the opaque coloring of it told Stoick that it was almost like a small lake in the middle of the room, the bottom no

where to be seen. His gaze danced across the water, so still and perfect aside from the disruption of a tear-like drip from the ceiling above. Ripples fanned out from the disturbance and Stoick watched the ripples dance to the opposite side, ending at the edge where Frosne stood, eyes penetrating through the darkness. Stoick hissed, reminded of his mission.

The chief began to inch around the pool, ready to plunge his sword into Frosne's heart. The enemy man didn't move. He watched Stoick nearing him, not even seeming to care. Stoick felt unnerved at this and began to fear a trap. He slowed before finally stopping, watching Frosne with a wary gaze as the reality of the situation finally sunk in. He was alone with a man who didn't even appear concerned. Stoick didn't know the layouts of the tunnels... it would take him ages to get back to his people... His people who could be in danger. He seethed to himself, realizing what an idiot he had just been. He turned, thinking it best to try and get back.

The exit was blocked, though. Alvin and Blood Cry stood there. Stoick knew then and there that he had truly been foolish. An idiot. What sort of a tribe leader was he to fall for such a dumb plan. His grip on his sword twisted and he pulled the weapon up before him. He would die here then. If he could take out at least one of these enemies, though, he would die a proper death. So be it. He started towards Alvin, muscles tensing, breath swathing around his face as a white puff due to the frigidness of the room. He felt sweat dripping down his face, icy. He felt a wild mixture of hatred and despair keeping him moving.

"You will die, Alvin," Stoick announced, readying his sword.

Alvin chuckled lightly. "Hope you can swim."

Frosne came up from behind and tripped Stoick up. With a mighty shove, Stoick felt himself thrown into the center of the room, right into the pool. It was freezing and his body tightened up with surprise. He lost his grasp on his sword. Stoick only saw it sinking for a couple seconds before it vanished into the darkness of the pool's depths.

\* \* \*

><p>Toothless wrapped his forearms around Stormfly. He used his wings and back legs to try and pull them up. However, it was difficult to do so in the shifting violence of the ocean. Stormly kicked a bit, but found it difficult to help. One of her wings was bent awkwardly, clearly broken. Hiccup could just make this out. He watched in pity as the dragon could only succumb to helplessness and rely on Toothless to try and help bring her to the surface and prevent her from drowning. Toothless, however, was struggling immensely.</p>

Hiccup released the handle of Toothless' saddle and detached his left limb. He pushed out into the open expanse of the sea. He was of no help just sitting on Toothless' back. He used his arms to come back over to the Nadder. The water was slowly staining red. Stormfly had a gash across her stomach that was slowly leaking into the surrounding water, creating a haze that Hiccup tried to avoid. He was slowly reaching his breaking point on air, lungs burning with desperation. He reached for Stormfly, however, wrapping hands around her neck and

kicking wildly with his real foot, the prosthetic of no use in the water.

Without having to worry about Hiccup any more, Toothless was able to move a bit more freely. The two of them slowly began to drag Stormfly back to the surface. The Nadder was growing weaker, eyes drooping as she slowly started to give into unconsciousness. Hiccup begged her in his heart to be all right. Astrid would be heartbroken if the Nadder were to die. And Hiccup would feel dreadful for having failed her. He kicked a bit harder, but without air, his attempts were becoming more futile.

A blur of bubbles beside him announced the presences of another. Hiccup glanced over and spotted a blond braid moving through the greenish depths. Astrid's blue gaze found his green eyes. She seemed worn and had a bloody nose that colored the water around her face. She was pale, but wasn't profusely injured. Hiccup felt a blanket of relief on him, but they still had not breached the surface. Astrid came up beside him to help her dragon swim up. Her good legs added a greater amount of help than Hiccup could and, between the three of them, Stormfly finally reached the air above.

Hiccup's lungs gulped down their own share of oxygen. He felt sick, his stomach churning. His legs tried to stop moving but he forced them to continue. Toothless led the way, tugging Stormfly along to try and get to a nearby shoreline. The swirling ocean waters heaved them about, trying to send them smashing into the sides of rocks that jutted from the ocean or along the cliff wall that Stormfly had fallen from.

"She's got a broken wing," Hiccup called out to Astrid, his voice barely audible over the ocean.

Astrid nodded. "And a gash... We got double teamed and then a third enemy came out of nowhere. Poor Stormfly crashed and I got knocked off and divided from her. Think she'll be all right?"

"Well, she's a lot like you so I'm going to have to say yes," Hiccup responded, struggling to keep Stormfly up and help Toothless pull her along.

Astrid glanced over, smirking despite the blood that flooded around her mouth from her nose. She seemed to regain a spark and she kicked at the water. Their clothes were getting heavier, but adrenaline gave the two teens the strength to keep moving. Toothless whined out to them. They glanced ahead and spotted a small shore along the main island. With a destination to now go to, a drive entered their systems and they kept moving forward. Stormfly raggedly breathed, eyes fluttering weakly. Toothless grunted softly, trying to get her stay awake. They were almost there.

They were almost there...

\* \* \*

><p>Ruffnut and Tuffnut clambered to the shore. Their limbs were weak from all the swimming and, for a moment, they allowed themselves the opportunity of just crashing into the sand, relishing the chance to ignore moving. They had removed their shoes during the swim, finding it easier without the heavy, fur-lined boots on. Tuffnut's chest rose

and fell with a great intensity while Ruffnut did her best to calm her racing heart and breath more evenly. They were both on their backs, eyes closed. They could hear shouting and screams coming from the caves where Stoick led the men and women to fight the Folk i Isen in the caves.<p>

"So... much... death... and... destruction," Tuffnut heaved.

Ruffnut couldn't even respond. The tone of Tuffnut's voice was obviously not of pleasure like they usually had when things were in chaos. This wasn't the same type of death and destruction they liked to watch. Like when Thor was setting the village on fire because of the metal. No, this was different. It wasn't enjoyable. It wasn't fascinating like fire was. Dangerous and, yet, strangely beautiful. No, this was hard core and this was real. It was awesome, but it wasn't exactly pleasurable.

Tuffnut stirred, moving into a sitting position as he finally regained his breath. "Ruffnut... If we don't survive, I just want to say. You're annoying. And I hate you. But you're the best sister I've got."

"I'm your only sister, idiot," Ruffnut fired back as she, too, sat up. "But I suppose you're okay for being the stupidest person alive."

"My specialty."

Ruffnut couldn't even laugh at the moment. She rolled to her knees before standing up. She felt disgusting now due to the sand that caked her body. Her hair was a mess, some of it falling out of her braids. It, too, was coated in a frosting layer of sand and it rubbed along her body irritatingly. Based on the way Tuffnut stood, he was experiencing the same discomfort. They glanced at each other with annoyance, but pushed past it, running towards the closest boat that was up along the shore. They neared its large hull and Tuffnut helped Ruffnut to get up onto the deck. She clattered to the ground.

"Nice landing, sis," Tuffnut spat.

Ruffnut just growled, standing back up and flicking her gaze about along the deck. There had to be weapons somewhere. She had lost hers in the crash and Tuffnut had used his to help Hiccup take out one of the Cauldron. She darted up to some boxes and heaved up one of the lids. Inside was one spear.

One. Spear.

If there was anything she and Tuffnut could never do right... it was sharing. But, it seemed, they wouldn't have too much of an option unless they wanted to check every single boat. By the time they found another weapon, though, the war could be over and they could miss it all. So she leaned over, reaching in and wrapped a fist around the weapon before pulling it from the crate. She tested it in her hand and deemed it worthy before heading back to the side of the boat and jumping over, landing on the sand a bit shakily.

"That's it?" Tuffnut asked.

She nodded before waving for him to come on. The two did their best

to dart along the sand to the caves. Their feet sunk in the rolling beads beneath them but they finally reached hard ground. Ruffnut felt her heart speeding back up, but not necessarily from the run. Her hands were growing clammy as she finally recognized the danger they were about to charge into. She readjusted her grip on the weapon as Tuffnut caught up and came along side her. The two peered into the cave before them, almost uncertain, and listened to the shouts that were fired about from inside. They exchanged a glance before raising their arms and bellowing out their best war cries.

Their legs carried them into the cave, but they had to take a couple twists and turns before they finally caught sight of their fellow villagers in the fight. It was a mass of flailing limbs, the occasional flash of red, and the clanging of weapons. The two stood at the edge, shifting about before Tuffnut fired a look over asking, "What should we do first?"

"I don't know, why do you think I would know?" Ruffnut replied.

A fierce grunt alerted her to an approaching enemy. She spun on her heels, her bare feet rubbing almost raw on the stone floor, and watched as the man neared, raising up a sword above his head, intending to bring it down and slice Ruffnut in two. She stood her ground, waiting until just before he brought it down before she rolled to the side. She sat back up on her heels, ignoring the sand rubbing against her like a rough rag. The man craned his head about to look at her, smirking.

"Ruff!" Tuffnut called out.

She tossed the spear to him. He caught it and approached the man, swinging the spear around. He struck the man on the head and grinned with triumph before he realized that he had just hit the men with the wrong end. The guy scratched at the spot on his face where the blunt end had hit him, seeming only irritated. Tuffnut huffed at himself before ducking the whirring of a sword that went out after him. He crashed back onto his butt.

Ruffnut came charging. "Toss it back!"

She caught the spear, but almost fumbled it in the process. She just managed to bring it up some as she reached the man, but only high enough to pierce him in the thigh. She felt the weapon sink into his flesh. He shouted out in agony, a bellow that nearly shattered her eardrum. He started to topple backwards and so she latched onto the spear, pulling it out of his leg as he landed on his back. The stone beneath him soaked up the red coloring and he snarled curses into the air.

"Damn children!"

Ruffnut pulled Tuffnut to his feet and the two high-fived, grinning. Their celebration was short-lived, as the man fought back to his feet and began to swing about like a wild bear just trying to slash his opponent. Ruffnut and Tuffnut had a hard time keeping up with his attacks, stumbling back in attempts to spare their lives. Ruffnut's eyes widened as he caught the end of one of her braids, lopping it off. Her braid came loose, hair spreading across her face and getting in her eyes. She felt terror seize her as she swiped at her face to clear it of the loose blond strands. The spear in her hand made it

harder to do so and she was so caught up in trying to see that she stopped moving.

She felt Tuffnut grab her shoulders and try to pull her back. Then her foot exploded in pain and she howled out in agony. She and Tuffnut went crashing onto their backs, but Ruffnut couldn't feel anything aside from the brutal pain coming from her right foot. She managed to pull enough hair from her eyes to look down and see what had happened. Her foot had been sliced. Right down the middle, clean through, seeming it had split it in half. It wasn't her whole foot, however, only coming up about halfway, but the pain was consuming and the blood was welling out like a erupting volcano. She gasped from the pain, starting to reach out to her foot, but then noticing their attacker barreling at them, though limping.

Tuffnut snatched up the spear which Ruffnut had dropped in pain. He lunged it forward as the man came down upon him. The next thing Ruffnut knew, the man's body lay on top of Tuffnut. A spear was sticking up through the enemy, having punctured his very body. But Tuffnut was not visible. Ruffnut was unaware of it he was alive.

"Tuff," she sobbed through her pain.

Normally she liked pain... but this wasn't the pain she and Tuffnut usually gave each other. This was... this was agony. This was more than seeing stars, this was seeing blood. Blood everywhere. She gasped, trying to move to the body to try and help her brother, but she couldn't. Her foot... her foot.

The body of the enemy shifted and was thrown off. Tuffnut lay on the ground, gagging for breath. He was alive. He was breathing. The man had managed to give him a cut down his left arm, but it wasn't too terrible. He easily stood up and rushed over to his sister, leaning down beside her with worry. He glanced up, the fighting still raging about them. Another enemy spotted them and Tuffnut squeezed his eyes shut.

Ruffnut saw this and for the first time she felt... defeated. Never had she felt this before. It was awful. Between this new feeling and her foot, which trembled on the ground, bleeding heavily, she was growing weak. She fell back, found herself staring up at the ceiling of the tunnel. So this was how it was going to end. Staring at the bleak grey coloring of a tunnel, her foot on fire, and ever fiber of her being just feeling sick. She had Tuffnut beside her and her family somewhere in the mess. She would never see Barfbelch again. It was over.

"It's over!" a shout echoed in the cave.

That voice.

Ruffnut raised her head and Tuffnut helped her sit up. She was growing pale. The enemy that had been coming at them stopped in his tracks. He turned and the twins looked in the direction that he gazed. Alvin. The brute of a man was parting through the Berk and Folk i Isen battle. Behind him, Frosne pushed a captured Stoick forward, sword at the ready to kill Stoick at any moment. The Berk chief was sopping and trembling, cold. He could not even glance up to meet the faces of the people he had failed. Frosne and Alvin were

laughing. Blood Cry was grinning that wicked grin. That wicked, wicked grin.

Alvin spun in a circle. "Berk has lost. No more fighting. We have won!"

The Folk i Isen broken out into cheers. A Berk man made a move to attack but Frosne pushed the sword closer to Stoick and the villager stopped. No one wanted to be the reason Stoick was killed at that moment. The Berk man dropped his weapon, the hammer hitting the ground with a clank. Other villagers followed suit and, soon, they were all empty handed. It was over. Gobber and Phlegma stood stiffly side-by-side, their faces dawning looks of disappointment and loss.

Ruffnut felt... tears. It was the worst feeling she had ever had. But she couldn't stop it. Beside her, Tuffnut sniffed, wiping furiously at his own face to hide the wet droplets that slid down his own cheeks. There was nothing they could do. Where was Hiccup? How were the dragons fairing? Did Berk have any hope left? It seemed as if there was none. Ruffnut lay back down, wondering if she would even get to see. Her foot hurt so bad...

Tuffnut snarled into the air, "It's not over, Alvin!"

"We'll see about that," the man responded, his smooth voice like a knife whizzing through the air. It seem to hit ever member of the Hooligan tribe in the chest and they all released their breath in a collective sigh. The end. This was it. It couldn't be. But what else could they do? Not everyone could perform miracles like Hiccup.

And it didn't seem he would be arriving any time soon.

\* \* \*

><p>...Hehe...</p>

Reviews, please! No flames, but constructive criticism is welcome if you feel I need it.

I apologize for any major typos and too-often repeated words. My laptop gave me a lot of trouble writing this chapter when it comes to typing for some reason...

Love,

Deyoxis

## 15. One Step Closer

Midterms are rough... but so far I've passed! One more to go. Then Spring Break! I wanted to get this chapter done before Spring Break because I will actually be out of the country and, with no international plan and little chance at wifi, I will not be able to update then, so I figured I owed an update before xD

\*\*Super hugs and lots of love to QuirkyRevelations, Zehava, KaliAnn, Alethea 13, Anony mouse101, storygirl99210, K, E, Pewter Griffon, RebelGirl13, fableweaver, and Foxlight the Dragon Tamer. You guys

continue to make me feel loved with your reviews... they are so kind.\*\*

I don't think I have anything else to say? This chapter is a bit calmer and shorter than the others, I guess. More of a "break" period before we get to the crazy, hectic bit of the next three chapters x3

\*\*Chapter Fifteen: One Step Closer\*\*

Gobber came up alongside Tuffnut, who was kneeling down beside his sister unsure what to do about the blood that continued to flow from her foot. The blacksmith lowered himself, pulling out a roll of cloth he had brought just in case something like this happened. He tenderly lifted Ruffnut's foot by the ankle, but she still had to grit her teeth to keep herself from moaning. He bound the wrap around her foot. She gasped, the rough fabric causing it to ache, but at least holding it together and preventing an excess amount of blood from seeping out. The man then curled his arms under her body and lifted her.

The teenaged Viking female grimaced lightly, but turned her face to Gobber's torso in order to hide it. She could feel Tuffnut's presence hovering beside them. It seemed her heart was in her foot and, with every beat, she thought the wrap would spring open and her foot would just split apart completely. Ruffnut's mind briefly wandered to her parents, wondering if they were safe. Did they know she was hurt? Would they worry about her or would they just think she needed to suck it up? Sometimes she felt like that's all she needed to do. Suck it up. After all... pain had never been a problem before.

But pain had never felt like agony.

"What now?" Tuffnut questioned Gobber, his voice filled with his normal stupidity but also an awareness. Even he understood the situation they were all in at the moment. Defeated. He had stopped crying, but Ruffnut could feel a couple more wet droplets fleeing down her cheeks as she swallowed in her concern and ache.

Gobber took a deep breath. Ruffnut could feel it shake his body. The man was conflicted. He didn't want to stop fighting... but he would not allow Stoick to die. That man was his best friend, practically his brother. Ruffnut knew that, although they shared a mutual hatred, she and Tuffnut also shared a bond, and she wouldn't be the reason he died any time soon. Gobber released the breath and she felt his arms slacken with uncertainty as he replied, "I guess we await Alvin's orders."

"We don't take orders from Alvin," Tuffnut tried to argue, but it was feeble, and Gobber didn't even bother to answer.

Frosne steered Stoick away now. Alvin sneered.

"Take him to the main room. I'll take these leftovers to the dungeons," the head outcast spat.

He waved a hand to his men that the Berk villagers had been fighting. The Folk i Isen warriors moved to pick up Berk's weapons and then waved them threateningly, barking at them to follow Alvin. The Hooligan tribe began to trail him down the caves, but it was a

crawling pace. No one could get themselves to walk any faster. Feet felt like heavy weights and hearts had sunken so low that they only added to the burden. Gobber hobbled along, still carrying Ruffnut and with Tuffnut close to him.

Ruffnut craned her head back around to watch where they were headed. The sides of the tunnel slid by in an unending wall of grey. She blinked, recalling the pattern of direction they had taken when Alvin had trapped her, Tuffnut, Fishlegs, Snotlout, Astrid, and Hiccup here not too long ago. One night had felt an eternity... especially since she had been in that horrid pit of darkness. Her hands began trembling. She wound her fingers in Gobber's shirt, trying to warm them and ease the fear that was trying to rekindle. The familiar chill of the dungeon was all ready greeting them and it didn't help that Ruffnut was starting to feel lightheaded because of her wound. Her eyes blurred for a moment as her breath curled around her face, signaling the drop in temperature.

Tuffnut stumbled, his toes having caught a small crevice in the floor. He nearly toppled to the ground, but caught himself, righting. A Folk i Isen that was behind him, though, decided he wanted to have seen Tuffnut fall. He struck the boy with the flat of a sword on Tuffnut's back. It wasn't enough to send Tuffnut tumbling over, however, but he did cry out - more so from surprise than actual pain, having not been aware the man was even there.

"Shut your yap!" the man then barked, kicking Tuffnut's feet from under him and sending him colliding with the floor of the cave. The enemy laughed dryly, sending a foot into Tuffnut's side as he tried to scramble to his feet.

Gobber wheeled about and glared. Ruffnut had never seen the man's eyes so dark. He stepped in front of Tuffnut, giving Ruffnut's twin enough time to be back on his feet and avoid another strike. The enemy man snarled and told Gobber to keep moving in a voice of ice. Gobber kept his stare up for another moment before turning back around and resuming his pace after the rest of the tribe. Tuffnut kept in front of him, glancing back with wide eyes, wondering how Gobber could be such a force even without a weapon or even a word to be said.

Soon, the cave opened up to the dungeon. It was a bit cramped getting everyone inside the room. It was lucky that many of the Berk force had been on dragons, they would have never all fit in this one room.

Ruffnut hushed her mind at the thought. If they were cramming the entire tribe in here, that would have meant for certain that they had lost. There had to be some chance that the dragon team could pull through.

Alvin's form stood at the head of the cave, torches behind him casting an eerie glow and making him seem more a silhouette at the front than an actual person. He was gargling a chuckle, head shaking. "Look at the great Berk now. How pitiful. You four, stay here at the entrance and guard them. They've got no weapons and, if they try to escape, I think a couple of shouts will be enough to get the entire army back down here to subdue them."

The four men addressed nodded, holding their weapons and the weapons

they had taken from Berk close. The rest of the men began to saunter off, heading to the main room to see what would become of Stoick. Tuffnut felt her anger boil hot in his blood, his face twisted in fury, Gobber holding much the same look. The Hooligan tribe watched as the enemy disappeared into the dimness of the cave, Alvin the last form they saw before they were left to rot.

\* \* \*

><p>Frosne pushed Stoick to the center of the meeting room. It was empty, which had Frosne curious. He had figured Hella would have been in here by now. He shrugged to himself, however, and turned his gaze to the Berk chief. The man's beard and clothes were still wet, but he was no longer dripping from his swim in the dark pool. Frosne could tell Stoick was cold, but the man didn't allow himself to shiver. The tribe leader was gazing down, causing his wet beard to cling to his face, concealing the look of defeat. Frosne snorted, never thinking he would have ever seen the day when Stoick the Vast dared to not even look him in the eyes. He felt the pleasure of victory in his grasp and, feeling the need to flaunt it, he approached Stoick, snagging the man's helmet from his head and sending it flying across the room. It skidded along the ground, the metal clanging echoing warily. Blood Cry and the dragons who had helped lead Snotlout's group to the cave-in were perched on a couple ledges up near the top of the room. Blood Cry growled under his breath, disturbed from the celebratory nap he was taking. The other dragons about him agreed warily with their own grumbles.</p>

Frosne then struck a hand against Stoick's head. The chief took a step to the right as he was hit, but no more. He still did not turn his gaze up and Frosne laughed with a pleasurable disbelief. He felt joy spreading through his limbs and punched a bit harder. Stoick still only took one step to the side to take the strike, but Frosne still grinned madly, overcome with his own thrill.

He forced himself to turn away before he went too far too soon. He wandered to the lone table in the room and threw his palms down upon it, hearing the wood splinter some beneath his hands. He relished in the pricks that scratched at his palm as bits of wood tried to pierce his skin. He belted out another round of laughter, the noise dark and filled with triumph. When he finally calmed, Frosne looked upon Stoick, who remained still, head bent. "How's it feel, Stoick? To be helpless?"

Stoick didn't even twitch. This stirred a bit in Frosne. He winced. He had the power, Stoick had to answer to him right now! "Answer me, you foolish man!"

The bloody idiot turned around. Frosne now found himself glaring at the back of the Hooligan chief and it pushed him nearly over. His right hand groped about before finding the sheathed sword attached at his hip. He yanked the weapon out, but was flustered with rage and nearly dropped it. He stomped up to Stoick from behind, raising his weapon, meaning to shove it through the other man's heart. He paused, however, knowing he had a deal with Alvin. But what did the deal matter? Frosne was the one with the men! If he took out Stoick now he would have what he wanted for the Folk i Isen. Then he would just have to remove Alvin from the picture and it wouldn't matter to Frosne any more... Yes! He could taste the power! It danced tantalizingly on his tongue. His hands sweated, stinging the small

cuts from the wooden table, making it difficult to hold his sword. He tensed his arm, he was ready to finish it... Stoick didn't move.

"Frosne!" Alvin roared as he entered and the Folk i Isen chief snarled, tossing his weapon away to the side in a blind fury.

Frosne wheeled to face Alvin, hissing a lie, "I wasn't going to do it!"

"Get your damn sword picked up," Alvin merely responded, coming forward and circling Stoick. The rest of the Folk i Isen warriors formed a circle around the edge of the room, watching with curiosity sparking in their gazes.

The outcast leader heard Frosne pick his weapon back up and sheath it. A thought occurred to him and his dark eyes found his accomplice. "Where is Hella?"

"Hell if I know."

Alvin roared, making a fist and delivering it to Stoick's stomach. Being much stronger than Frosne, his blow caused the other man to stumble backwards, but Stoick caught himself. It didn't stop Alvin and he ran forward, using the back of his fist to connect with Stoick's cheek, following swiftly with a blow to the back of Stoick's right knee, sending the chief to a kneeling position. Stoick heaved a breath, eyes still glued to the floor, but refusing to fall to the ground.

The sound of footsteps prevented Alvin from doing anything further. Hella arrived, dragging Snotlout along with her. The boy tripped up, limped, then stood back up and followed. His lip was busted open, his face splotched with his own blood. Though it wasn't visible, his left ankle was swollen, explaining the limping gait he now struggled to maintain. He glanced up, eyes wary, before he spotted Stoick. Upon seeing his leader, Snotlout seemed to dishearten, his fight draining, and he slackened, Hella now fully dragging his body forward.

"What took you so long?" Alvin questioned.

Hella grimaced angrily. "Little snot got away from me. Had to chase him about the tunnels. He tripped at one point... seems to have injured his ankle. I butchered his lip for good measure."

"We can see," Frosne pointed out from where he was standing to the side.

Hella just cast him a glare before slinging Snotlout forward. He went sprawling down beside Stoick. The chief seemed to become alert at that moment, noticing the boy beside him. His nephew. His eyes widened as he watched Snotlout tremble into a sitting position. The kid glanced up at him, eyes fearful about what would happen next. Seeing his deceased brother's son beside him reawakened a bit of the fire that usually burned hot within him. He felt his fists clench, dirty nails digging into his palms before finally raising his head up to the enemies.

Stoick took in a breath. "You are the fools. Too quick to celebrate. The war isn't over. The dragon force..."

"You really believe your pitiful dragon force can save you all? I actually have the pleasure of informing you that you're wrong," Alvin countered. "Wasn't little Snotface here a part of the dragon force?"

The Berk leader felt the sickening truth in the pit of his stomach.

"Berk has no chance of winning. All your dragon force will be dead soon and we will conquer you and your precious homeland. Are you ready to join your son in Valhalla?"

\* \* \*

><p>An ocean wave sent them tumbling. Toothless was the first to recover and quickly righted Stormfly. Astrid and Hiccup were pushed away, the strength of the ocean making it difficult to get back to their dragons. At this time, at least, it was shallow enough that Toothless seemed to gain some footing and was pulling Stormfly in by himself rather easily. Seeing this, Hiccup kicked out with his one foot and pulled at the water with his hands in order to get to the shore.</p>

Never had sand felt so precious as at that moment. He crawled up onto the land on his hands and knees, chest gasping for easy air, limbs tired from the frantic swimming. When he was clear of the tide, Hiccup took the minute to collapse down in the sand, arms splayed out to the sides and welcoming the little beads against his cheek and in his hair and along his clothes. He didn't care how uncomfortable they were, he was just glad to be back on land. Water was really starting to irk him. Aside from drinking and bathing, he wasn't sure he was going to hang out in it any time soon.

He could hear Astrid next to him. She, too, was probably lying in the sand, enjoying the brief respite. A groan from Toothless, however, and Hiccup was pushing himself to stand. He dusted himself off as best he could, but was shaking, the little bit of adrenaline he had left in his body doing everything it could to provide him with the energy to remain upright. He turned and helped Astrid up, examining her face to see how her bloody nose was fairing. It seemed to have stopped bleeding for the most part, but was red and a bit puffy.

"It looks worse than it is, I'm sure," Astrid hummed, noticing him staring. She then turned and did a jog over to Stormfly and Toothless, who were lying on the ground a bit further up, getting in as much rest as they were allowed at the moment.

How the girl could manage even a slow jog right now, Hiccup wasn't sure. He walked over, coming up to Toothless and reaching out to his best friend, patting him on the nose with a smile. "Great job, Bud."

Astrid ran her fingers gently along the bent part of her dragon's wing. She winced, sighing with a copious amount of worry and frustration. She couldn't fix it. Not here. She would need Gobber's help. So she merely assisted her dragon in moving the wing into a more comfortable position until it could be checked thoroughly. The blonde female then turned her attention to the gash that was at the base of the Nadder's neck, running down the chest. It was still

bleeding, the crimson ooze sliding out and drenching Astrid's fingers as she investigated how deep it was. She felt herself breath normally again when she determined that the cut wasn't life threatening. Stormfly would be all right with some proper healing to her wing and some good rest.

She relayed the news to Hiccup and he allowed himself a small grin. Even Toothless perked up a bit, glad to know their struggle to save Stormfly was not in vain. The Night Fury let out a purring noise before standing up, nosing Hiccup enough to nearly send the boy toppling. He composed himself, nodding, knowing they needed to get back to the battle and make sure Fishlegs and the others were holding up. As his mind drifted to what had happened not so long ago, he came to an unfortunate conclusion.

"What's wrong, Hiccup?" Astrid questioned, scrutinizing him, noticing the concern that seemed to settle across his features.

The female was motioning Stormfly to go hide in the shelter of a nearby rock formation. The Nadder, though seeming annoyed that she could no longer fight or help, obeyed and stomped away, glancing back only once. Astrid watched with a small frown, concern for her dragon's safety etched in her mind, but knowing it would be more dangerous to bring her injured friend into battle.

Hiccup bit his bottom lip, contemplating momentarily before he admitted, "This was all a big set up. We've played right into Alvin, Frosne, and Hella's hands. They split us up for a reason... They had a net ready for us. Who knows what they've done to Snotlout's crew. And my father... he and the twins and Gobber and Phlegma and all your parents..."

He stopped when Astrid shook her head. The blond ponytail, even though it was dripping wet, smacked against her shoulders as she tossed her head about. Hiccup wiped some of the sand from his cheek as he gave her a puzzled expression, thinking she didn't believe what he was saying.

"No, I just don't want to hear any more of that. If we're going to win these battles, we have to stay focused and confident. C'mon, lets get back to the others."

She pulled herself onto Toothless. The Night Fury snorted, bright green eyes flashing to meet Hiccup's darker gaze. The dragon nodded, signaling that it was time to return to the fight. They were of no use standing around on the beach worrying about the others. They had to do something if they wanted to help. So Hiccup quickly pulled himself into the saddle. He checked his foot was secure and his grip firm. He bitterly wished his attachment cords had not snapped, but there was no way of fixing them now. He grunted to let his best friend know he was ready and felt Astrid's arms slip around his torso securely. Then they were in the air.

Hiccup and Astrid peered over the side of Toothless to see if they could spot Stormfly. The dragon had hidden herself well, however, so the two weren't able to spot her among the rocks that rose up below them. Toothless let out a roar as he sped back to the arena. He didn't have far to go but, when they arrived, they weren't exactly greeted with what they expected to find.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hiccup!" Fishlegs screeched, but watched as Toothless dove over the edge, going after Stormfly. Fishlegs couldn't figure out how exactly the Nadder had ended up alone without Astrid, but the poor dragon seemed injured and had plummeted over the edge. Hiccup and Toothless had reacted like lightning, plunging after their fallen friend, but that left Fishlegs in terror.</p>

He stammered in worry, eyes darted about, trying to find Astrid. He ducked as a dragon went hurtling by above him, nearly taking out his head. Pressed against Meatlug, Fishlegs squeaked, panicking and uncertain. Meatlug continued to do her thing, however, barreling into enemies or conking them upside the head with her powerful, rock-like tail. She spat her fire sparingly, worried about hitting a friend in the mass chaos or draining herself too soon. She was all ready a bit tired, the fighting wasn't easy. She felt Fishlegs patting her comfortingly, whispering that they would be all right, but she merely went on. She had learned to fight long ago. She hadn't survived the kill ring back when Vikings and dragons were at war for being weak.

She felt Fishlegs suddenly shift about wildly, then one of his meaty arms was in her peripheral vision, pointing. "Look, it's Astrid! Oh, thank Thor she's all right!"

Meatlug watched the girl running. Running towards the cliff edge that Stormfly, Toothless, and Hiccup had gone over just a moment ago. She heard Fishlegs groan, could smell his perspiration and his anxiety, knowing what was coming, and the boy and his dragon watched the female jump out off the edge before vanishing. Meatlug was always impressed by the bravery the girl had, but could never remember her name. Aside from Fishlegs, all the teens blurred together. The boy with Toothless also seemed to have spunk. It was very likely that he had some of that due to the fact he rode a Night Fury. Meatlug was well aware of the superior skills her fellow dragon held. She wasn't useless, herself, not in the way Fishlegs tended to make her out to be, but she would certainly be useless plunging into frigid water to try and help a Nadder swim back to shore.

No, it was best if she remained up here. She could smell something burning. Flesh. It had never been a nice scent. Not even when dragons and humans were enemies. It was rather disgusting, but it filled her nostrils for a moment before it faded amongst the smell of blood and power.

"I guess we just keep fighting, huh, Meatlug," Fishlegs mused.

Meatlug let out a roar and zipped over to headbutt and another Gronckle. The two beasts collided in the air, but the other Gronckle had been ready. Bracing himself, he took the impact rather well and wasn't knocked too off course. He turned, snarling. The Folk i Isen warrior upon his back was a hefty woman with sunken eyes and crooked teeth. As far as humans went, Meatlug could tell she wasn't what most would consider... gorgeous.

The woman barked at the Gronckle she rode and the beast slammed into Meatlug. He smelled of fish. Heavily of fish. Did the beast go fishing before the battle? How odd. Meatlug pushed back, trying to

keep herself straight. She noticed the woman yank out a hammer. The enemy moved to swing it at Fishlegs, who ducked, crying out in alarm. He groped for his own weapon, a mace, and detached it from where it hung to Meatlug's saddle. Meatlug used a scrawny forearm to scratch at her opponent, giving her just enough of an upper hand for Fishlegs to swing his weapon. The woman deflected it with her hammer, then jabbed it forward. She hit Fishlegs in the chest, catching him off guard. Meatlug couldn't aid him, locked in a battle of might with her fellow Gronckle.

Her boy choked on the loss of air as his chest was struck, but somehow raised his mace back up in defense as the woman attempted to strike him again. She pulled back, intent on trying once more when the roar of a Nightmare rang out. Meatlug's ears twitched and she noticed her enemy also paused, listening. When the male Gronckle caught word of what the Nightmare was saying, he released Meatlug and flapped a couple beats away, turning. Meatlug wheeled herself around and noticed the Nightmare that was roaring. It was a blue one with a green tint to him. He was jumping excitedly, nipping at another Nightmare, who released a round of purrs.

The Berk warrior and the Folk i Isen warrior on top of the two were watching with a confused curiosity. Most of the other dragons all around them had stopped and turned their attention to the two beasts. The Berk Nightmare began to grumble hurriedly, glaring up at the Folk i Isen warrior every so often. The warrior, growing irritated, spat at his Nightmare. "Attack, you stupid beast!"

The Folk i Isen Nightmare snarled, displeased. Meatlug chuckled and heard Fishlegs take in a breath.

"The Nightmares are friends!" the boy beamed.

When the Berk Nightmare seemed to be finished with the story it was telling, the Folk i Isen dragons were growing wary. They exchanged glances. Growls bounced around the air above the arena as the dragons conversed. Berk dragons encouraged them, their shrill voices eager to earn the trust of their once enemies. Meatlug turned herself to her fellow Gronckle, her own voice joining the crowd as she rumbled to him earnestly. They didn't have to fight. The Folk i Isen and the Outcasts were the enemy they all needed to be against. They were nothing but power-hungry men and women. The Hooligans, however... they were... they were friends.

As the realization finally made its way to every dragon, the Folk i Isen became aware of what had just taken place. Fishlegs laughed heartily as the dragons they had just been battling turned on their warriors. Folk i Isen were tossed from the backs of dragons, spat at with sticky fire, smashed with powerful Gronckle tails, struck with poison spikes of Nadders, or crushed in the jaws of Nightmares. The men and women of half of the Folk i Isen dragon force screeched in freight and dismay as they were taken down in a frenzy. Fishlegs told Meatlug to stay back, not wanting her to get involved. She was fine with that. Though she was glad they were taking down the enemy and gaining more allies, it was sickening to watch the slaughter of the men and women about her. But she wouldn't stand up for them. She could smell the blood, coppery. She could smell decay happening so soon.

As the final bits and pieces of the enemy were defeated, Meatlug let

out a grumbling purr, and faint roar of joy. She smelled relief and happiness, then. One part of this war was done. Surly if they had such success here then they were doing as well elsewhere. This war would be over soon. Painless, perhaps. Looking about now, very few of the fallen warriors and dragons were ones hailing from Berk. She could smell Folk i Isen blood. That tainted the air the most. This, to Meatlug, was considered quite the accomplishment. Fishlegs seemed to be overjoyed, though probably not because of the smell. He wrapped his arms about her and she let her tongue slide out and splat him across the face. He tasted funny, but he seemed to like it, so she didn't mind showering him with her slobber.

Her ears twitched as she heard a familiar beating of a huge wingspan. One that could only belong to a Night Fury. She hobbled about in the air to face the approaching dragon and spotted the skinny boy and the female upon his back. She could smell the skinny boy's metal lag. So metallic. Meatlug throatated a welcome and Toothless returned the gesture, but with an echo of confusion. She chuckled lightly. He missed all the fun. She quickly questioned him about Stormfly, to which he promptly responded that she was safe.

"What happened?" the scrawny, destroyer of the Red Death asked. He seemed both immensely puzzled but he was smiling, too. The female was, as well, her slightly crooked teeth making her seem what the humans would consider... cute? Yes, that was the term.

Fishlegs shifted excitedly upon her back. "A Berk Nightmare and an Outcast Nightmare were friends... The Outcast Nightmare convinced all the other Outcast dragons to join our side so..."

"We won!" the female breathed (her name was Astrick or something, right?).

The skinny boy shook his head. "Not yet... Toothless, do you hear any fighting going on by the beach where my dad is?"

Meatlug wasn't surprised that the boy was aware of just how well Toothless could hear. She had heard about the time when Toothless had escaped the cove and sprinted to the boy's aid in the kill ring when Hookfang had gone nuts. It had to have been obvious to him then just how well Toothless could pick out sounds from far away. But the Night Fury snorted, shaking his head before beating his wings powerfully to regain some altitude he had lost while hovering.

"They must be inside the caves. We need to check and see if everyone's all right," skinny boy pointed out.

Fishlegs and Astrick were in agreement. The three teens caught the attention of the rest of the dragons and announced what they would be doing. Meatlug heard the swell of roaring and smelled the anticipation about her as the dragons caught on to the fact that this war wasn't over. They had work to do. Toothless let out a screech before turning to lead the charge. Meatlug beat her wings onward, ready to do what had to be done to protect her humans.

\* \* \*

><p>See, shorter and calmer. The next three chapters will be much more exciting.</p>

Though this chapter was a nice chance to work a bit with a dragon's perspective. I'm not sure why I suddenly switched into Meatlug's mind... I guess Fishlegs and I just don't work xD

Review, please! Or, if you are confused or have any questions, don't be afraid to ask!

I'll get back to updating after Spring Break so, warning now, nothing for two weeks.

Not that I've been updating that quickly as of late anyways  
o.o

Gosh, school... I HAVE A FANFIC TO WRITE x3

Everyone who has one, have a lovely Spring Break! To those who don't... Just have a wonderful week anyways xD

Love,

Deyoxis

## 16. A Game of Luck

Sorry for not being able to update right after Spring Break. With school coming to a close... lots of papers... lots of projects. Had to squeeze some writing in when I could. Hope this chapter makes up for the wait! I tried to make it spicier than I originally planned (lol, never thought I would use the word 'spicier' to describe my writing...).

Oh, and a funny story...

I didn't remember what happened in chapter fifteen so when I pulled up my notes for chapter sixteen I was like, "WHAT IN THE WORLD IS HAPPENING!?"

So then I had to reread a bunch of stuff xD Sad when one can't even remember their own story... Good thing I have all my notes!

\*\*Extra hugs and lots of love to Just a Crazy-Man, KaliAnn, Pewter Griffon, Anony mouse101, QuirkyRevelations, Raine Vinyaya, E, Alethea 13, and all the people who reviewed chapters other than chapter fifteen (I would name you but I can't remember who all did the reviews...)\*\*

\*\*To the guest who told me her name's Astrid:\*\* I am well aware her name is Astrid... I called her Astrid for fifteen chapters. But from Meatlug's point of view, I had her kind of mess up Astrid's name because Astrid isn't as important to Meatlug as Fishlegs is.  
Haha.

To the chapter!

\*\*Chapter Sixteen: A Game of Luck\*\*

Toothless found a cave entrance and landed. He began the trek into the cold depths, eyes glowing bright and hot with anger and determination. Hiccup was tense upon his back, shoulders bunched

lightly and eyes narrowed. The boy calmed his breath, listening to the echoes of the cave and the alighting of claws hitting the ground as the rest of the dragons landed upon the ground behind them to follow. Hiccup ground his teeth for a moment, hissing to himself as he tried to figure out where they needed to go. He could feel Toothless' body beneath him; tight and ready to fight if an enemy dared to show themselves. Hiccup couldn't decipher his own emotions as they headed through the tunnels, uncertain of what exactly they were searching for. His fury was loose, but his anxiety was high, too. He felt accomplishment and pride from their win but he knew that he had to be ready.

"Hear anything, Bud?" Hiccup murmured.

Toothless let out a small whine, then snorted. The dragon paused, raising his head, elongated scales shifting to help him detect sounds and vibrations. His claws clenched, scraping along the ground in a screeching sound before he huffed, growling, eyes narrowing, a snort. The Night Fury began to move again. The dragons behind them all followed without protest or questioning. The men and women upon the backs of many of the dragons also kept their mouths shut, listening, poised for an attack.

Their pace seemed to take eternity to Hiccup. He couldn't figure out why Toothless was moving so slow. He patted his friend's neck lightly, urging him to pick up the pace but Toothless only threated, ignoring him. The dragon picked tunnels carefully and his steps seemed to be just as careful. The dragon whined again as they reached a split in the tunnels. Shifting uneasily, Toothless glanced down the one that arched up, but then stared hard and long into the lower tunnel. He hesitated, thinking, his tail lashed and nearly knocked Fishlegs right off of Meatlug. The Gronckle let out a disapproving hiss, but Toothless hardly paid her mind. He approached the lower tunnel, sniffing.

Hiccup turned his body around to face Astrid, who Hiccup had almost forgotten was riding on the back of Toothless with him. He had been so focused. The female just shrugged, having no idea. Hiccup then turned to Fishlegs, thinking that he would have some sort of answer. Fishlegs seemed nervous before saying, "Toothless doesn't seem sure about which way to go..."

"I wonder why. Can he not hear where the others are?" Astrid questioned softly.

Hiccup bit his bottom lip. He felt a gnawing fear that Toothless could hear exactly where the others were. The problem was that the others were split up... and Toothless wasn't sure which group to track down. Hiccup was pulled from his thoughts when Toothless let out a piercing shriek into the tunnel he was gazing down. The roar echoed off the walls and sides, trailing down into the darkness before vanishing from hearing range, caught in the thickness below. Hiccup turned his body about, checking to be sure that no one had heard them and was going to be on them in a moment. Just what they would need is for the Outcasts and Folk i Isen to have the upper hand... knowing their location.

Nothing, but soon a sound disturbed the air from the deepness of the tunnel that Toothless had roared down to. Hiccup's eyes widened and his heart clenched. He looked over to see Fishlegs' eyes widening, as

well, catching on to what they had just heard. It was Hookfang. The Nightmare was down in the tunnel.

Worried for his cousin and the other half of the dragon force that had been with Snotlout and Hoark, Hiccup ordered Toothless to go down without a second thought. He told Fishlegs, and a couple others to follow but for the rest to remain where they were. If they needed help, Toothless would call back up to them for them all to come down and assist. But Hiccup didn't want too many rushing down the tunnel, for it seemed smaller.

Toothless slowed even more than Hiccup thought possible as the tunnel seemed to slip into night. The dragons' breathing were heavy in the air, seeming extra loud in the stillness of the cave. They were pretty far down, Hiccup was aware. Probably as low as the dungeons, but this place was different. There was barely enough light to move without fear of hitting the sides of the tunnels, but Hiccup squinted through the darkness and noticed a couple torches lined up along the walls, unlit. Toothless blew them to life with his fire and, soon, an orange glow took hold of them all. And before them, Hiccup was astonished to see a large wall of rocks. It was a cave in, and Hookfang was trapped on the other side.

Jumping off of Toothless, Hiccup approached the great wall before them. Astrid and Fishlegs came up alongside him, gasping with astonishment at what they were seeing.

"Hookfang?" Astrid finally called, running a hand along a rock. She maneuvered about until she found a large gap big enough for her and Hiccup and get through if they wanted. She bent low and called through it, "Hookfang?"

"Astrid, is that you?" Hoark's voice replied.

Astrid pulled herself up right and gazed over at Hiccup, who pulled a hand to his chin, thinking about what must have happened. He finally came up alongside Astrid and bent low to speak through the small hole to the other side where Hoark and Hookfang were. "Hoark, what's happened? Who all is in there?"

"The whole bit of the dragon force that wasn't with you. Aside from Snotlout, at least. Alvin's Thunderdrum trapped us in here by causing a cave in. The dragons have been working at trying to pull the rocks away, but it's difficult to see and we're worried about causing a bigger cave in. We're all trapped," the Viking man responded, his voice husky, filled with a sort of anguish and annoyance for not being able to escape.

Astrid's face twisted in confusion. "Where's Snotlout?"

"Crawled out that hole that you're talking to me through. Unfortunately, I think Alvin and Hella caught him as he escaped. Not sure what's become of him now."

Hiccup felt his blood run cold and he exchanged a look with Astrid. He knew she was thinking the same thing. Snotlout was probably dead. Alvin had taken Spitelout's life and now probably the boy. Hiccup's fists clenched tight, wondering how much of his family's blood would be spilled before this was all over. He didn't realize just how tight his hands were until Astrid laid one of her own upon his. His green

eyes noticed how white his fingers had gone and he released them, the blood flowing back in smoothly, bringing back a more healthy pink tinge.

Hiccup's breath was ragged and visible in the cold air. He stood straight and turned to Toothless and the other dragons and men and women that had come with them. He nodded his head just barely and said, "We have to free Hoark and the others. Lets get these rocks out of the way."

"Hiccup, it might just make things worse. Hoark said they were worried about causing the cave in to get bigger," Astrid protested.

"We have to try. We'll need all the help we can get to stop Alvin and the others. What choice do we have?"

Astrid's lips formed a hard line and she couldn't respond. A sigh escaped her throat and she finally nodded. She joined Hiccup, Fishlegs, and the other men and women off to the side while the dragons approached the great wall of rocks and began to work at it. Hoark instructed the dragons on the other side and the sound of rocks tumbling soon echoed about the cave. Any Nadders - since they don't have much of forearms - worked at protecting their friends from the falling debris. Soon, a gap was forming along the top of the tunnel, big enough for Vikings but not yet for a dragon as big as Hookfang and other Nightmares. So the dragons pressed on, the time ticking by, each moment causing Hiccup and the others to feel more tension building up inside them as they could only hope they would be able to aid everyone else in time.

As soon as they had cleared enough debris, Hoark and the trapped Vikings cheered excitedly, their freedom opened before them. They began to climb out and Hoark rushed up to Hiccup. The man grinned lightly and was about to inquire as to what they were going to do next when a screech hit their ears. Hoark wheeled around and watched with Hiccup, Astrid, Fishlegs, and the others as Hookfang tore through the opening and shot through the cave like a bola tossed into the air. The Nightmare was gone in an instant leaving everyone standing behind rather baffled and uncertain.

\* \* \*

><p>"Can I kill him now?" Frosne asked, voice cutting through the air with a vicious poison to it. The man's eyes were narrowed and hauntingly dark, peering out from his pale face that was surrounded by his black hair, which had become tangled and unruly throughout the day. His arms were crossed and he was standing at the edge of the room with a stiff back and tight lips.</p>

Alvin snorted, shaking his head. "You think we're going to end all the fun so soon?"

"You should, before something goes wrong," Hella hissed, teeth clenched, posture similar to that of Frosne's.

"Nothing can go wrong. We have everyone right where we want them," Alvin laughed, throwing his arms out to the side and spinning to gaze upon the Folk i Isen men. By now, only one original outcast aside from Alvin remained.

The men cheered, but were disgruntled. No one would be truly celebratory until Stoick was lying in his own blood and Berk was conquered. So the shouts stopped abruptly, leaving Alvin growling to himself, wanting to relish in his victory but finding not as much support as he had initially hoped. Giving up on the rally, he wheeled to Stoick and Snotlout, who remained on their knees in the center of the room, unchained but with no where to run. Nothing they could do but await their impending doom. Alvin licked his lips excitedly, tasting his salty sweat that coated them. He scratched at his beard, a devious smirk upon his face and dark eyes glinting with the fires of hell.

"I've been waiting for this day," he breathed huskily.

Then he claimed one of the rocks that littered the floor of the cave. He had always been meaning to clear them away, they tripped him up as he walked about, but now he was thankful he had never gotten around to his chores. He bounced the stone in his hand, the sharp edges scratching at his palm, the chill of it's rough surface making him shiver with delight. Then he flung it with all his might at Stoick. The chief didn't know it was coming, failed to react, and it clipped him on the side of the head, knocking off his helmet. The armor splattered to the ground beside Snotlout, who watched it twirl along before it settled to a stop. The boy gulped, thinking he might be a target soon, as well. He shuddered as he recalled the first capture and how Alvin had beat him and Tuffnut with his sheathed sword. Snotlout had all ready had that head injury, the added bruises had made the events all the more painful.

The men caught on to what was being offered and began scooping up rocks and firing them. Stoick noticed the inevitable onslaught about to come his and Snotlout's way. He twisted his body about and shoved Snotlout as far as he could muster just as the first wave of rocks rained down. The boy tumbled away, clear of the bullets that Stoick now took from all directions. His body armor protected him for the most part and his incredibly muscled body could handle the hits well enough. But as the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth wave struck him, he began to wear out. He could no longer attempt dodges. His arms were a bloody mess, crimson dotting about him like a strange piece of artwork as he had raised his arms and hands to defend himself. He roared, snatching up a stone and flinging it back, but couldn't focus with blood smearing his vision and ammo striking him continuously. He heaved, falling down to his hands and knees. It was becoming too much and Snotlout could see that Stoick wouldn't be able to hold out much longer. Once the chief was knocked out.. Frosne would kill him.

From up on the ledges near the roof of the cave, a rumbling roar echoed. Snotlout craned his neck back and noticed Blood Cry and the half of the dragon beasts that hadn't been fighting Hiccup's group. They were watching, eyes bright and shocking. They glinted, but none so much as Blood Cry's. The Thunderdrum still seemed a bit antsy at the same time, however. Snotlout knew it was probably still hoping for revenge against Thornado and the Bone Knapper. The two dragons had been with Snotlout's force and, therefore, were trapped back in the cave with Hookfang and Hoark and the others. Snotlout bit his bottom lip as anger swelled in him. Blood Cry. This was monster that was the reason Hookfang and all were trapped. The reason Alvin was now a dragon rider.

And Snotlout couldn't stand it. Even more than he couldn't stand being useless next to Hiccup.

So Snotlout spat on the ground, blood mixed with his saliva from his busted lip, and cried out at the dragon, "Think you're so mighty? You are sick. You are hurting your own dragon friends! Ones who merely want to live in peace with humans... But Alvin doesn't want peace he only wants death and destruction!"

Death and destruction. Funny how the twins jokingly admired that phrase so often... but now he knew that they, along with himself, probably couldn't despise it more for the time being.

Blood Cry just eyed him with a look of indifference. Clearly the dragon didn't seek out peace. He truly was a beast of evil. Unfortunately for Berk, he had been the perfect dragon for Alvin. How lucky for the Hooligans (sarcasm much). Never had such a convenient thing happened for their enemies as this. Snotlout had never seen luck as playing a part in wars and battles. It took strength and - though he would never admit it - wits to win these sorts of things. Usually. But in this case, Snotlout could truly see how luck had been on Alvin's side that day they met Blood Cry. He wondered if things might have been different if that first Nightmare had befriended Alvin. That creature perhaps hadn't been quite so... devilish. It may have turned against Alvin and aided Berk. But it was too late for wishing for such ideas. The Nightmare was dead, anyways, with thanks to Alvin's lack of patience and brutality.

Snotlout's call did accomplish one thing, though it failed to phase Blood Cry. Alvin raised a hand and ceased the stoning of Snotlout's chief and uncle. The boy glanced over and felt his stomach clench with worry at the sight of a man he had seen as second strongest to his father bunched over, barely holding himself up, seeming as if he might be sick everywhere. Snotlout moaned, it was all over. He just sat there, watching. His injured ankle was beating with the pulsing of his heart. How much longer it would be beating, Snotlout was becoming increasingly aware of. He tried to shift about, get as comfortable as he could manage even with the stinging of pain in his body. He didn't want to die dishonorably, though. He'd throw one last punch if he could.

"You can just shut your yap, kid. Hella, go ahead and dispose of the boy. Stoick can watch the beginning of failure before he, too, is slaughtered," Alvin hissed.

Snotlout was looking death in the face. It was a woman and, by Thor, he had never thought it would be a woman who would kill him. Not that women weren't fierce opponents (Odin knew he feared Astrid), but that's just never how his grand death scene played out in his head. And he had been older... Saving Berk... Maybe killing a dragon (it was before they were friends, okay?). But this was it. The end. No going back. The flash of silver in the flickering of a torch light. Snotlout wished the door that led to the outside ledge was open. Maybe one last glimpse of the outside world. One last chance to see the sea, feel its chilly breeze, taste the air. No time. No chance.

And he never got to say goodbye to Hookfang. But he never got to say goodbye to his father, either. Perhaps he wasn't meant to. Karma for

his rudeness, perhaps. Not that he believed in karma, but Fishlegs had spoken of it once. Hm... never get to apologize to Fishlegs for being a bully... or to Hiccup. Or hit on Astrid one more time just for her to punch him or hang out with Ruff and Tuff.

Never prove he could be worth something to his tribe.

So he balled up his fist. He was ready to punch. One last stand before his death. Don't go down without a fight.

Snotlout, Snotlout oi oi oi.

But before the sword could meet his throat there was Hookfang. The Nightmare plucked him from the ground, flipping him up onto his neck before seizing Stoick with his hind legs. Snotlout was caught between disbelief, confusion, and an outpouring of joy. Hookfang was alive. Hookfang was okay. And now he, Snotlout, and Stoick might have a chance of surviving this, too. Snotlout wrapped his fingers around his dragon's horns and crossed his legs underneath the neck of his friend. His ankle cried out in protest but Snotlout didn't care. He could cry over a stupid ankle when this was over.

"Hookfang, the door!" Snotlout ordered.

Alvin let out a shriek of pure rage. It split the air and set the men off. Hella was flabbergasted, her sword having swung at air. Frosne was shouting curses, damning Stoick and Alvin and Snotlout alike. Blood Cry was the first to really react, springing from the ledge and launching at Hookfang.

Hookfang spun to the side, trying his best not to toss Stoick about too much. Snotlout hung on tightly, grimacing, feeling his stomach flip from lack of food. The Nightmare sprung towards the door that led to the outside ledge and shot out a spray of fire. It seeped down the door, melting away the wood. Hookfang shot out into the open air, letting out a earsplitting cry of triumph despite the fact they weren't home free yet. Snotlout couldn't help but hollar, as well, though he knew Blood Cry and the other dragons were in pursuit.

Snotlout had more time to breath. He was alive.

\* \* \*

><p>"Where did Hookfang go?" Astrid asked, clambering back onto Toothless.</p>

Hiccup quickly pulled himself onto Toothless in front of her. The Night Fury led the way back to the rest of the group that hadn't come down to free Hoark and the others. The ride back, Hiccup thought quietly to himself. It would make sense if Hookfang had gone to find Snotlout, which meant that there was a chance his cousin could still be alive. But Hiccup could only wonder where his dad was. Where Gobber and Phlegma and the twins were. How had their land army done? Well, he hoped. Horrible, he feared.

Fishlegs was blubbering away something about Nightmares when they were all reunited with the rest of their squad. Hiccup padded Toothless' neck to gain his best friend's attention. The dragon craned his head around, moaning inquisitorily. His elongated scales

flapped, nervous for his rider. He let out a couple chirps, urging Hiccup to share his thoughts.

But Hiccup wasn't sure what his thoughts were. Normally, he should have some idea right now that would help them all escape this mess or find the others or save the day. But he didn't even know where half of their people were. And he was worried for them. For his father. He didn't want to be too late to save the day. He had almost been too late to save his tribe from the Red Death those many months ago. The stress was beginning to overwhelm him. How could he ever be chief one day? He cared immensely for his tribe. But he couldn't always be the hero they needed. He had messed up once all ready with having to give in to Alvin. How many more times would he mess up? How many more lives would it cost?

"Hiccup stop blaming yourself. And you don't have to play hero all alone. We're all here for you," Astrid's voice cut in from behind him.

Snapping out of his thoughts, Hiccup noticed that Toothless was purring up at him. Hiccup twisted in his seat so that his green eyes found Astrid's blue ones. They were comforting and welcoming. Yet they were fierce and ready. Her nose was stiff puffy, but it didn't stop the determination that burned hotter than a Nadder's fire within her. Meatlug wagged about and Fishlegs was smiling softly, nodding his head while Hoark, who was sitting upon Thornado, was laughing gently, shaking his head.

Hiccup cocked his head at the man but Hoark only said, "You're your father and mother's son, that's for certain. Stubborn, but strong."

Hiccup shook his head, shrugging, chuckling. "Strong is a loose word in my department. But thanks, guys."

"We should get going," Astrid tried to push.

Toothless throatyed loudly and Hiccup responded, "Yeah, Toothless, thank you to you, as well."

The black dragon tossed his head, showing that's not what it had been trying to convey. He throatyed again and his elongated scales quivered. Toothless took a couple steps down the tunnel that sloped upwards, setting his paws down carefully. Meatlug and the other dragons all shifted, sensing the sudden awareness. Fishlegs questioned his dragon about what was up, but Hiccup remained quiet, letting Toothless think and listen. The boy went ahead and wrapped his hands around the handle of the saddle, thinking he would need to be prepared. Astrid noticed this and quickly attached her arms around his waist.

Hiccup didn't even have time to enjoy her closeness, because his instincts to be ready proved right.

The sound of a dragon's cry hit their ears and everyone immediately perked. It was Hookfang's cry.

"Let's go!" Hiccup ordered without a moment's hesitation.

Toothless took off, speeding along the floor of the tunnel. The

dragon force of Berk, their riders, and the dragons that had converted from Alvin's side to theirs followed behind, keeping close, moving like one huge mass. Growls echoed between dragons as they hyped themselves up, aware that a fight was coming. There were still dragons to convince to their side and men to defeat. This war wouldn't end until one side was down. They had to be sure it wasn't their side.

Exiting the tunnels like lightning, Toothless was airborne with an army of fellow dragons behind him. Hiccup scoured the air, seeking out the Nightmare. When he finally spotted the dragon, he was relieved to see Snotlout riding on top. The bloody mess that dangled from Hookfang's rear claws alerted him, however, and he knew instantly who it was. Face contorting in fury, he spoke over his right shoulder to Astrid.

"I need you to wait down on the beach as a safe point for Hookfang to drop my dad off to. I'll lead the others to stop the dragons following them."

Astrid clearly wanted to protest, but Hiccup steered Toothless down to the beach and she hopped off without questioning. She wasn't much use just as added weight to Toothless and, without Stormfly, she would be more assistance on the ground.

"It's not much, but take my dagger. Just in case," Hiccup breathed, pulling the thing out from its sheath and tossing it down to her. She caught it with ease and then watched Toothless race back up into the air and take the charge towards Blood Cry and the other enemy dragons.

Her blue eyes then found Hookfang and watched his dodging form, watched it as it spun away from Thunderdrum cries and balls of fire. Astrid jumped up and down, screeching out Hookfang's name to get his attention and lead him to the beach to drop off Stoick. The dragon heard, his great head flicking in her direction before he began to maneuver her way. Astrid grinned, but the grin was temporary. She heard a snarling curse echo in the air and glanced up. Alvin was on the ledge way up high, Frosne and Hella flanking him. He began to wave his hands about dramatically and Astrid could tell he was telling his men to get down to the beach.

Astrid glanced down at the little dagger in her hand and pondered the army that was about to come and charge the beach. They needed their ground forces... now.

\* \* \*

><p>"What do we do when we get hungry?" Tuffnut questioned into the air. He was lying on his back beside Ruffnut, but was addressing the guards that stood at the entrance of the dungeons. The men were grasping the warning horns close, eyeing the people of Berk as if they might launch at them any moment.</p>

At the question, one of the men blinked, annoyed. Tuffnut had been asking them all sorts of random questions since Alvin had left them. It was driving the guards nuts. Another man rubbed at his temples, praying to whatever god was listening that the boy would be quiet. They had threatened the kid multiple times, but Tuffnut was not deterred and the men weren't certain if they were actually allowed to

kill the boy yet just for his constant talking. So they forced themselves to endure, though one proceeded to bang his head upon a wall with only his helmet protecting him from the concussion he would otherwise give himself.

"You starve," the fourth man sighed.

Tuffnut sat bolt upright, eyes wide. "Starve? I can't starve! You gotta' bring us food, right?"

Though to the men he was being his annoying self, Ruffnut was well aware of the pain that laced Tuffnut's voice. Her brother was confused. He was trying to act normal and he was treating the whole situation as normal but, since he had killed the man who had wounded her, he had started to become too... Tuffnuty... He was trying too hard to act as if everything was all right. But Ruffnut wasn't sure what to say to her conflicted brother, so she just watched him glumly from where she was lying upon the ground. Gobber had brought her a rock to prop her foot up upon. It was uncomfortable, but it eased the pain some as it was harder for her heart to pump the blood towards her injury.

Attempting to cheer him some, Ruffnut declared, "We'll just eat you, Tuff."

"Hey!" Tuffnut fired back, but he didn't even look at her as he said it. He punched at the ground with a loose fist. "You're the one who's all ready partially cut. Be easier to just eat you..."

He mumbled the last bit but Ruffnut caught it. She sighed into the air, feeling numb. By now the pain had just overwhelmed her senses. Her stomach was twisted and knotted, her hands felt clammy and sweaty, and the cave floor beneath her was so cold that she felt she was all ready lying in her grave. She hummed to herself softly, wondering where her parents were. She figured they must have been in the dragon force. If they were in the ground force with them in the cave, surely they would have come to see their ailing son and daughter?

But no one except Gobber or Phlegma really tended to them. The rest of the men and women clumped in groups, whispering, casting nervous glances and eyeing the guards. Clearly they were plotting, which was a big reason why the guards were so nervous and clung so tightly to the horns even despite Tuffnut's constant chatter.

"Can I go to the bathroom?" Tuffnut asked.

The guard banging his head on the wall stopped and said, "Yes."

Tuffnut's eyes widened. Ruffnut groaned, seeing where this conversation was headed all ready. Poor Tuffnut was about to fall for the guard's stupid trick.

"Where is it? Can you lead me?" Tuffnut grinned.

"I said you can got to the bathroom, I didn't say I'd take you to one. Just go where you are."

"Oh," Tuffnut responded. The boy reached for his pants and Ruffnut

groaned, unbelieving that he actually had to go bad enough that he would do this right now.

She did her best to turn over, not wanting to watch. It was at that moment that a strange noise echoed in the dungeon. Then a louder, but not quite a cacophony, wail followed after it. She sat up, pushing through the numbness that clung to her body to accept the leaping of hope that sprung into her chest. She began to repeatedly hit Tuffnut with the back of her left hand excitedly, wondering if he knew what the noises were like she did. He was bouncing lightly on his butt, no longer reaching to pull down his pants so she figured he understood. The two glanced in the direction of Gobber, Phlegma, and the other Vikings, but they were all still clumped, whispering and focused on whatever they were doing. Not one of them seemed to even acknowledge the noise that the twins heard.

"Gobber!" Ruffnut called.

He didn't hear.

"Gobber!" Tuffnut tried.

He still didn't hear.

The two, frustrated, both picked up their voices and, in unison, "Gobber!"

"What is it, you kids?" Gobber asked, pulling away and hobbling over to them. The two just grinned at him and he listened, blinking, before a smile began to spread across his face. A laugh escaped his mouth and he nodded excitedly to show the twins that they had done a good job.

Ruffnut and Tuffnut high-fived. Too bad the one time they were genius was the time when none of the other Viking teens were around to witness it.

Gobber easily got the attention of everyone else. The men and women paused, listening. The silencing of their whispering was met with the noises that now flooded the dungeon. Of dragons and men roaring and yelling. It meant that a fight was breaking out. And if Alvin was busy then there would be no way they could stop the Berk ground force from escaping. So the men and women of the Hooligan tribe were grinning. Their eyes were all trained upon the four guards with an eager intensity. The guards shifted nervously. One began to raise the horn to his lips.

Phlegma was on him in an instant. The other three tugged at their swords and axes but Hooligans flooded over them, preventing them from fighting back and giving them no chance. Ruffnut and Tuffnut watched from where they sat, but Tuffnut soon stood, realizing it would be time to leave in a moment. If they were lucky, they would never see this dreaded dungeon again. No more cold walls. No chains and locks and beatings or Dark Pits or outcasts or Alvin or war. They could go home and recover. Ruffnut's foot would heal and Tuffnut would come to accept his first kill. It was just a part of the Viking way. Occupational hazards if you asked Hiccup or Stoick.

Gobber, Phlegma, and a couple other Vikings took the guards' weapons, but most of the army was without any. It was a risk to go to the

beach and prepare to fight with nothing to fight with, but Gobber announced to the men and women they didn't have much of a choice. He pointed at Sven and asked the man to gather up Ruffnut. She needed someone to carry her up to the beach and they couldn't leave her down here in the dungeon alone.

Ruffnut allowed herself to be hoisted into the man's arms. She expected Tuffnut would run along beside Sven and her, but the boy slipped through the crowd to reach Gobber. He approached and tugged the man's sleeve, garnering his attention. Gobber looked at him, wide eyed and curious when Tuffnut announced he knew the fastest way out because they had been down in the dungeon before. Gobber was about to shake him off. It was difficult to trust Tuffnut's memory and leadership skills, but the boy insisted. Ruffnut, from Sven's arms, was proud of her brother for stepping up to the plate. Normally they just stood in the back and let Hiccup or Snotlout or Astrid or Fishlegs take charge. But for once, Tuffnut was going to play a role in this.

So the boy took off and the tribe followed. They were about to go into battle without weapons but no one cared. They accepted the risks. They would beat the Folk i Isen and Alvin or die trying. That was the Viking way and it was honorable.

As Sven jogged after the others, trailing in the back, Ruffnut had time to double check her brother, make sure he was really leading the right way. She let herself smile, certain he was correct. Then she saw a door go by. Strange. She had only seen one door on Outcast Island and that was up in the meeting room, the one that led to the outside ledge. She tugged at Sven's beard with a fever and ordered him to go back to it real quick. He seemed uncertain, but eventually complied due to her incessant pulling (which hurt!) and they relocated the door. Sven set Ruffnut down so that he could unlatch it. Once he pushed it open, the two were caught in a moment of disbelief. What luck!

Sven was a fairly quiet guy. Just sort of obediently followed whoever was in charge. But today, he shouted for Gobber in the loudest voice that Ruffnut had ever heard.

Because Gobber had to see this.

\* \* \*

><p>Ta-da!</p>

Winding down! Three more chapters, woot!

Uhm... sorry for any spelling/grammar mistakes. I always have some that I miss... I might go back and edit them one day but... yeah xD ((Update: Just edited a couple (including the weird Tuffnut spelling that Pewter pointed out...)) Bet I've still missed a bunch. If anyone sees any other major ones, don't be afraid to let me know, I don't mind fixing!))

Read and review, please!

Otherwise, thanks for sticking with me and reading!

Until the next update!

(School ends in two and a half weeks!)

Good luck to everyone who has finals or exams coming up!

Love,

Deyoxis

#### 17. Author's Note

Soooooooooooo...

Hi there, guys, haha. I, uh... wow... I've recently gotten reviews and one was about how I needed to finish this story and they're totally right, haha.

Because, man, I meant to finish this story forever ago.

The reason why I haven't?

Well, I lost all my notes. I had the entire plot written out, every detail, every finishing touch in a notebook. And I lost it. Without my notes, I found I panicked and became too disheartened about this story and just sort of... left it. So, yeah, that's the reason why I kind of seemed to have given up on this.

But, with the second movie looming in the future, getting me pumped up, I'm feeling a renewed energy. And, while reading over this story has made me laugh because man, what was I thinking for half of this stuff, I'd like to finish it!

So, I'm posting this today to let you all know that I'm currently in the process of figuring out how I wanted this story to end, what in the world Ruffnut and Sven found in that closet place (because whoops I've forgotten), and just gathering up the bits and pieces to figure out how the final chapters will go.

I probably won't be able to get the next chapter out for about two-three weeks while I finish up classes at University. But once those are done, I'll put my focus into finishing this.

I'm sorry for the wait, but hopefully (despite all the errors and weirdness this story totally had), some of you guys are still interested in knowing what happens! So thanks for sticking with me, it really means a lot :D

Love,

Deyoxis

End  
file.